

SERMONS

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

Of the Liberty of Moral Agents.
A Virtuous Mind the best Help to
understand True Religion.

The Practice of Morality leads to
the Practice of the Gospel.

The Character of a Good Man.

The Nature of Humane Actions.

How to judge of Moral Actions.

The Nature of Religious Truths.

Of Christ's calling Sinners to Re-
pentance.

The Excellency of Moral Quali-
fications.

Of Humility.

Of Poverty of Spirit.

Of the Virtue of Charity.

The Nature of Relative Duties.

The Inconsistency of the Love of
God, with the Love of the
World.

The Folly of mocking at Sin.

322

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27





CONTENTS.

SERMON I. Of the Liberty of Moral Agents.

St Joh. viii. 32.

*And ye shall know the Truth, and the
Truth shall make you Free.* Page 1

SERM. II. A Virtuous Mind the best Help to understand True Religion.

DAN. xii. 10. latter part.

*And none of the Wicked shall under-
stand; But the Wise shall understand.*

29

VOL. III.

A 2

SERM.

C O N T E N T S.

SERM. III. The Practice of Morality leads to the Practice of the Gospel.

St JOH. vi. 44.

No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent me, draw him. 61

SERM. IV. The Character of a Good Man.

GEN. xviii. 19.

For I know Him, that he will command his Children, and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment. 83

SERM. V. The Nature of Human Actions.

St LUKE xi. 35.

Take heed therefore, that the Light which is in Thee be not Darkness. 103

SERM.

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M. VI. How to judge of Moral Actions.

St LUKE vi. 44.

*For every Tree is known by his own Fruit:
for of Thorns men do not gather Figs,
nor of a Bramble-bush gather they
Grapes.*

123

S E R M. VII. The Nature of Reli- gious Truths.

2 TIM. ii. 25.

*In Meekness instructing those that oppose
themselves, if God peradventure will give
them Repentance to the acknowledging of
the Truth.*

145

S E R M. VIII. Of Christ's calling Sinners to Repentance.

St MAR. ii. 17.

*When Jesus heard it, he said unto them,
They that are whole have no need of
the Physician, but they that are sick:
I came*

C O N T E N T S.

*I came not to call the Righteous, but
Sinners to Repentance.* 167

S E R M. IX. The Excellency of Moral Qualifications.

A C T S xi. 24.

*For he was a good man, and full of the
Holy Ghost.* 189

S E R M. X. XI. Of Humility.

S t L U K E xiv. 11.

*For whosoever exalteth himself, shall be
abased; and he that humbleth himself,
shall be exalted.* 207. 233

S E R M. XII. Of Poverty of Spirit.

S t M A T T. v. 3.

*Blessed are the Poor in Spirit; for Theirs
is the Kingdom of Heaven.* 259

S E R M. XIII. XIV. Of the Virtue of Charity.

I C O R. xiii 3.

*And though I bestow all my Goods to feed
the*

C O N T E N T S.

the Poor, and though I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing. 281. 305

S E R M. XV. The Nature of Relative Duties.

C O L. iii. 20, 21, 22.

Children, obey your Parents in all things; for This is well-pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your Children to Anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your Masters according to the Flesh. 329

S E R M. XVI. The Inconsistency of the Love of God, with the Love of the World.

I J O H. ii. 15.

Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World: If any man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him. 351

S E R M.

CONTENTS.

SERM. XVII. The Folly of mocking at Sin.

PROV. xiv. 9.

Fools make a Mock at Sin.

371



SERMON



S E R M O N I.

Of the Liberty of Moral Agents.



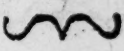
St JOH. viii. 32.

*And ye shall know the Truth, and
the Truth shall make you Free.*



THE Evangelist, in the fore-
going part of this Chapter, S E R M. I.
having recorded a large Dis-
course of our Saviour's con-
cerning his being *the Light*
of the World, or, the *Teacher of true*
Religion, ver. 12; concerning the Testi-
mony he bore of *himself* by the Nature
V O L. III. B and

S E R M. and Tendency of his *Doctrines*; and the
 I. Testimony *the Father* bore of him, by his
 miraculous *Works*, ver. 14 and 18; concerning his *Departure* out of the World, and the *Reason* of the *Jews* refusing to believe on him, ver. 21 and 23; concerning the *manner* of his Death, and the great *Success* wherewith the Gospel should afterward be propagated, ver. 28; The Evangelist, I say, having at large recorded these *Discourses* of our Saviour, proceeds in the next place to relate the *Effect* these Discourses had upon the People, ver. 30; *As he spake these Words, many believed on him*: Namely, Upon *Jesus's* foretelling several Things that were to happen to Himself and to the Nation of the *Jews*, many that heard him were disposed to consider and compare what they had known and heard of him before; and being perswaded that he was a Person sent from God, they declared that they *would* become his Disciples. But Jesus, knowing who these Converts were, and that their Faith was not firm and well-grounded; and that with those new Disciples many also of the unbelieving *Jews* hypocritically joyned themselves, with intent

to take some private Opportunity of *kill-* S E R M.
ling him; as appears from the following I
part of the History: He said unto them, 
ver. 31. *If ye continue in my Word, then*
are ye my Disciples indeed; If ye will be
truly my Disciples, ye must not only
profess by a sudden perswasion to be con-
vinced of the Truth of what I say, but
ye must so retain and steddily adhere to
my Doctrine, as to conform your Lives
and Practises thereto; If ye continue in
my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed.
And then he adds in the Words of the
Text; *And ye shall know the Truth, and*
the Truth shall make you Free. The
meaning is; And by such Practise, you
will continually attain a more and more
perfect Knowledge of the Truth; and
That Knowledge will secure to you the
greatest and most desirable *Freedom* in the
World.

THAT by *Truth* in the *New Testament*,
is meant the general Doctrine of the Go-
spel revealed to us by Christ, I suppose
needs not any particular Proof in this
place. That *continuing* in the Practise of
Christ's Commandments, and sincerely
endeavouring to obey the Will of God, is

S E R M. one of the best and greatest Helps to en-

I. able a man to understand perfectly, the *Truth* and *Reasonableness*, the *Necessity* and *Excellency* of the Doctrine of the Gospel; is also sufficiently evident, without farther Explication at This Time. The only Difficulty in the Words of the Text, is the Sense of that latter part, *And the Truth shall make you Free*. For what Relation there is between *Truth* in the *Understanding* and *Liberty* in the *Actions*, does not appear at first sight: And 'tis still in the reading of Scripture as great a Paradox to some Christians at This day, as it seemed to be to the *Jews* at the time when it was spoken; that it should be said of such Persons as had never been *Slaves*, that the *Truth* should make them *Free*. The Explication is given by our Saviour in the Words following the Text; and yet given in such a manner, as not to appear but to those who read with Attention. For the *Jews*, when our Saviour had spoken these Words, *The Truth shall make you Free*, taking them in the gross and literal Sense, replied, ver. 33. *We be Abraham's Seed*; we have by Descent a natural Right to Freedom, and

of Moral Agents.

5

were never in bondage to any man; How S E R M.
sayest thou then, Ye shall be made Free? I.

Upon This, our Lord opens to them the true Sense of the Words, ver. 34. *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* Which is to say: Ye fancy, because with respect to *Bodily Service* ye are not in bondage to any man, that therefore ye are really *Free men*. But forasmuch as to whomsoever men yield themselves servants to obey, his Servants they are to whom they obey; and of whomsoever a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage; therefore, so long as you continue in your Sins, you are as really Slaves, as any person that is in bondage to the severest Master; For there cannot be a greater Slave, than he who is under the Power and Dominion of unreasonable Lusts. This is the evident meaning of that expression; *Whosoever committeth Sin*; not by inadvertency or surprize, not by mistake or sudden incursion, but deliberately and habitually, as was the Case of those *Jews* our Saviour discoursed with; *whosoever so committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* And This will illustrate the meaning of that more difficult

S E R M. passage, which follows immediately in the
 I. next words, ver. 35. *And the Servant abideth not in the House for ever; but the Son abideth for ever: If the Son therefore shall make you Free, ye shall be Free indeed.* I know indeed, says our Lord, that you esteem yourselves highly, upon your belonging to the Family and House of God, which was first set in order by *Moses*; and that upon this account you will claim to yourselves even That spiritual Freedom, whereof I am now speaking. But, let me assure you, neither is that Privilege you boast of, your being the peculiar people of God, sufficient of itself to give you real Freedom from the Dominion and Guilt of Sin; neither, if it could, was the Authority of *Moses* intended to continue always, but only for a Time, like that of a *Servant*, and to give place at length to the Authority of the *Son*, whose Government in God's house is to continue for ever. Wherefore the only means, by which you can preserve to yourselves the Privilege of God's peculiar Family, and obtain a perfect Freedom from the Slavery of Sin, is, that ye submit to the Authority of the *Son* who
 is

of Moral Agents.

7

is now come into the World, and that S E R M.
ye continue in Obedience to his Doctrine I.
and Government. *The Servant abideth*
not in the House for ever; but the Son
abideth for ever: If the Son therefore shall
make you Free, ye shall be Free indeed.

THE Design and Meaning of our Saviour's whole Discourse being thus explained, the Doctrine contained in the Words of the Text, appears evidently to be This; That the *religious Restraints* laid upon men by the Gospel are really and truly the *greatest Liberty*; and the *Service of God*, the most *perfect Freedom*: *If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed: And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you Free.*

LIBERTY, all men are sensible, is a Jewel of inestimable Value; and therefore there is nothing more earnestly or more justly contended for, nothing more universally or more reasonably desired. But, alas! As *Children* are often eagerly desirous of what they do not understand, and know not when they are in Possession of what they desire, but are put off and pleased with false resemblances of things, and hold fast something really contrary

SERMON. to what they think they are fond of:

I. So, in This particular, *Men* themselves, even Wise men and Learned, the Rich and the Potent, the cunning and the most sensible in other Affairs, are very frequently imposed upon, (I should say, impose upon themselves,) and love to be deceived, and take pains to abuse their own Understandings; and, while they love Liberty above all things, embrace Slavery in the stead thereof; shutting their Eyes, and calling things by false Names, and stiling Bondage Liberty, and Liberty Bondage. For while *All* men contend for Liberty, wherein does the *greater part* of the World imagine true Liberty to consist? Most men seem to place it in being allowed to let loose the Reins to all their Appetites and Passions without controul; to be under no restraint either from the Laws of Men, or from the Fear of God. *Princes* generally think it to consist in having the Power of tyrannizing over the multitude of their Subjects, and sacrificing the common Rights and Properties of Mankind to their own single and unreasonable Ambition. The *common People* are apt to place it in unbounded Licentiousness, and having no superiour but the

the Humour of the Multitude. The Co-^{SERMON,}
^{I.}vetous person would gladly be allowed to
 increase his Treasure by some shorter steps
 than those of honest Industry and patient
 Labour. The *Debauchee* thinks no Chains
 more troublesom, than those which would
 confine his Pleasures from irregularity and
 excess. And oh! how happy would the
revengeful spirit be, might he but have
 Liberty to satisfy his Malice, without pre-
 sent Shame or future Danger! This, 'tis
 to be feared, is the Notion too great a
 part of Mankind have of Liberty. And
 what a Liberty is This? Is it not like the
 Liberty a Madman desires, of being per-
 mitted to destroy himself? Is it any thing
 more, than a Liberty to chuse the worst
 of Slaveries, and to exchange the Go-
 vernment of a most reasonable Master,
 for that of the worst and cruellest Ty-
 rant? For, *what* does the *Ambitious Prince*
 or the *Licentious Multitude*; what does
 the *Covetous*, and *Revengeful*, or the *De-*
bauched Sinner; but only chuse to be a
 Servant to *Passion*, instead of a Follower
 of *Right Reason*? What is it that makes
 a *Beast* be a Creature of less Liberty than
Man, but only that its natural Appetites
 more

S E R M. more necessarily govern all its Actions,
 I. and that it is not indued with a Faculty
 of Reason, whereby to exert itself, and
 gain a Power or Liberty of over-ruling
 those Appetites? For if the true Liberty
 of a Moral Agent does not principally
 consist in the Power of over-ruling such
 Appetites; *wherein* lies the Excellency of
 humane Nature at all, above the infe-
 rior Creation? Or what superiority has
 Man above the Beasts that perish, in any
Moral regard; if his greater Knowledge
 and Understanding serves only to make
 him feel and be sensible of his Subjection
 to those lower Appetites, which the other
 Creatures are naturally subject to, with-
 out being sensible or having any uneasy
 Reflexions that they are so? Is not the
 Difference, in such a Case, This only;
 that the Man is really the greater Slave,
 or has the less Liberty of the Two, be-
 cause *He* only is by his Reason capable of
 understanding that he wants it? If a
 man's Body be under confinement, or he
 be impotent in his Limbs, he is then
 deprived of his *bodily* Liberty: And for
 the same Reason, if his *Mind* be blinded
 by sottish Errors, and his Reason over-
 ruled

of Moral Agents.

II

ruled by violent Passions; is not This S E R M.
likewise plainly as great a Slavery and as I.
true a Confinement? For, *to whomsoever* 
men yield themselves servants to obey, (as
the Apostle excellently expresses it,) are
they not *his servants to whom they obey*,
Rom. vi. 16, and *of whomsoever a man is*
overcome, of the same also is he not brought
in bondage, 2 Pet. ii. 19?

BUT here it is obvious for the Liber-
tine to reply, that he has no Notion of
the Slavery we speak of, nor is at all sen-
sible that he is under any Restraint: For
what greater Liberty can a man have, than
to do what he pleases? or what can he
desire more, than to do what he wills
without controul? I answer: This is in-
deed the True Definition of mere *physical*
or *natural* Liberty; that is to say, of That
Liberty which is common to Man with
every living Creature, with the savagest
Lyon, and with the meanest Insect. For
They also do what they will, and go and
come as they please, and follow the In-
stinct, and gratify all the Appetites of Na-
ture. But the Liberty of a *Moral Agent*
and of a *rational* Being, implies some-
thing more. It implies a Liberty of do-
ing

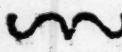
S E R M. ing what is *Right*; a Freedom of heark-
 I. ning to what *Reason* dictates, and a Power
 of executing what the unprejudiced and
 improved *Understanding* judges to be fit;
 fit and reasonable, fit for *Him* who is a
 rational Person, fit for any *Other* rational
 Person in *His* place, to do. And *this* Li-
 berty the Sensual person parts with; and
 suffers himself to be captivated, *against*
 his Reason, by the Law of Sin.

T H E Licentious Sinner will still reply;
 He is not *sensible* of any such Captivity,
 or any Slavery he is under; He gives him-
 self his full Liberty to do what he thinks
 fit; and greater Freedom than This how
 can he desire? But the Answer to This
 Fallacy is evident. For as a Man while
 he sleeps in his Prison, is not sensible
 of his Confinement, and yet continues
 confined: Or a Madman imagines the
 Room he is shut up in to be as spa-
 cious as the World; and yet receives no
 enlargement: Or an Idiot embraces and
 admires his Chain as the brightest Orna-
 ment, and yet it continues a Chain: So
 the vicious Libertine, while his Eyes are
 blinded with Ignorance and Prejudice, his
 Understanding darkned with false Repre-
 sentations,

sentations, and his Will bribed perpetually with deceitful Allurements; while he loves the Dominion of Sin, and takes pleasure in the Practise of Unrighteousness, and silences the Voice of Reason and Conscience; he fancies himself Master of the most unbounded Liberty, and yet at the same time is really in bondage to the most unreasonable Service. The Scripture describes this State by a most elegant similitude, of mens being Dead in *Trespases and Sins*, Eph. ii. 1, 5. by their being inclosed in the *Snare of the Devil*, and taken captive by him at his Will, 2 Tim. ii. 26. by their being brought into Captivity to the *Law of Sin*, Rom. vii. 23. By the History of *Samson*, who, after many repeated insults, yet would not see the Bondage he was in, till his Strength was departed from him: And by the description of a foolish young man led away with the inticements of a strange Woman, Prov. vii. 21. *With her much fair Speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straitway, as an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, or as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks; Till a dart strike through*

S E R M.
I.
~

SERM. *through his liver, as a Bird hasteth to the*

I. *snare, and knoweth not that it is for his*
 *Life.*

BUT This, is not generally the Case of Sinners. More usually, they not only are in Captivity to Sin, but feel also and know themselves to be so; and yet have not Courage to assert their Liberty. Their Reason is over-ruled; and their Passions govern them, even against their Judgment. Which, in a figurative sense, is exactly what Solomon literally complained of, *Eccles. x. 7. I have seen Servants upon Horses, and Princes walking as Servants upon the Earth.* When Reason, which ought to govern, is thus dethroned; and the Fear of God, and all Sense of Religion laid aside; the man is then under the Dominion of his Passions, as of many disagreeing Masters to be served at once; and his Heart is like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up mire and dirt, *Is. lvii. 20.* He is tossed to and fro with impotent and impatient Desires, torn in pieces with eager and impetuous Appetites, pusht on by unruly and exorbitant Affections, tormented with vain and disappointing Hopes, and as often with groundless or too well-grounded

grounded *Fears*; consumed with *Envy*, SERM.
 or swelled with *Pride*; raging with *An-* I.
ger, or anxious after *Revenge*. This is
 the thralldom of a man enslaved to Sin;
 and *Who shall deliver him from the Body*
of this Death? The Scripture describes
 the miserable state of such Persons, by
 many elegant ways of Expression: Tel-
 ling us, that they are *Servants of Sin*,
 Joh. viii. 34. *Servants to uncleanness and*
to iniquity, Rom. vi. 19. and *Servants of*
Corruption, 2 Pet. ii. 19. that they cannot
cease from Sin, 2 Pet. ii. 14. that *Sin hath* Pl. xix. 13.
Dominion over them, and reigns in their cxix. 133.
mortal Bodies, while they obey it in the
Lusts thereof, Rom. vi. 14. 12. That tho'
 in their mind they approve the Law of
 God, yet they see another law in their
 members warring against the law of their
 mind, and bringing them into captivity to
 the law of Sin; so that they cannot do the
 things that they would, Rom. vii. 22. and
 Gal. v. 17. That when at any time to
 will is present with them, yet how to per-
 form that which is good they find not;
 For the good that they would, they do not;
 but the evil which they would not, That
 they do, Rom. vii. 18. and ver. 15, That
 which

S E R M. *which they do, they allow not; For what*

I. *they would, That do they not; but what they hate, That they do.* All which, is comprized in One expressive word in the verse foregoing, ver. 14. they are *sold* under Sin: That is, they have by long ill habits and corrupt practise, as it were *given up* themselves, *parted with their Liberty*, and *yielded* themselves absolutely into the *Snare of the Devil, to be taken captive by him at his Will.* The Phrase is twice applied in the *Old Testament* to *Abab*, 1 Kings xxi. 20, 25. that he *did sell himself to work Wickedness in the Sight of the Lord.* And twice, to the whole people of *Israel*; in the days of *Hosea*, 2 Kings xvii. 17. that they *sold themselves to do evil in the Sight of the Lord*; and in the days of *Antiochus*, 1 Macc. i. 15. that they *were sold to do mischief.*

AND now if this be the Case of habitual Sinners; we may well ask concerning *Liberty*, in the words wherein *Job* put the Question concerning true *Wisdom*; *Where then shall Liberty be found? and where is the place of True Freedom?* And the Answer may be returned in the Words of the same excellent Author; *Be-*
bold,

Job xxviii.
12.

Job xxviii.
28.

hold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Freedom; and to depart from Evil, is True Liberty. SERM.
I.

THE True Liberty of a Rational and Moral Agent, consists in his being able to follow *right Reason only*, without Hindrance or Restraint. It consists in a clear unbiassed Judgment, and in a Power of acting conformably thereunto. Man therefore is then *Free*, when his *Reason* is not awed by base *Fears*, nor bribed by foolish and fantastick *Hopes*; when it is not tumultuously hurried away by *Lusts* and *Passions*, nor cheated and deluded by false Appearances of present *Good*; but considers *impartially*, and judges *wisely*, and acts *effectually* and with Resolution. This is the Liberty of a rational Agent; the Freedom of a Man, of a Christian, of an Angel. Not that in this present frail state, we can ever actually arrive at such a perfect Freedom; but that by studying and practising the Truth, the Truth of *Nature* and the Truth of *Religion*, we may and ought continually more and more to assert and improve our Freedom, till at length we arrive at the glorious Liberty of the children of God.

SERM.

I.



BUT here the profane Libertine will ask, as before; Is it not a greater Liberty, for him to follow absolutely his own Pleasure, then to be under the direction of the Laws of right Reason and Religion? I answer; It is by no means so great a Liberty: For when a man follows *true Reason*, his Will is directed by its natural and proper Motive, which is a right Understanding; But when he follows what he calls his *own Pleasure*, his Will is then directed by a false and unnatural Motive; by *Error and Prejudice*, by *Obstinacy and false Appearances of Things*. Now 'tis very evident, that what *Impotency or Bonds* are to the *natural Liberty* of the *Body*, that very same thing is *Ignorance or Passion* to the *moral Liberty* of the *Mind*. Wherefore as the Body is then free, when it is moved by the Natural Action of the Blood and Spirits, and not by the Convulsive Motions and Violence of a Disease; so the Mind is then and then only Free, when its Choice is directed by the natural Motive of right Reason, and not by the violent impetus of a blind and headstrong Passion.

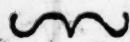
THIS

THIS Argument may further be illustrated in the following manner. God Himself is a Being, as of all other Perfections, so particularly of the most perfect and complete *Liberty*. Now *His* Liberty consists in this, that being infinitely *Knowing* and infinitely *Powerful*, 'tis impossible he should ever be influenced by any *Violence*, or by any *Deceit*; but his *Will* is always directed by *absolute Right and Reason only*: And This is what we vulgarly call, his being *Necessarily Just and Good*. Not that *Justice and Goodness* are *Necessary* in him by a physical, natural and immediate *Necessity*, exclusive of *Will and Choice*, in the same Sense as his *Omnipresence* or *Eternity* is *Necessary*; (For then it would be no more proper to return him *Thanks* for the Exercise of his *Justice and Goodness*, than for being *Eternal or Omnipresent*; Which is manifestly absurd.) But the meaning of his being *Necessarily Just and Good*, is This only; that the *Liberty* by which he always chooses what is eternally and absolutely right and good, can never possibly be infringed, no not in the least degree, by any Error or Passion, by any Violence or by

S E R M.
I.
~

S E R M. any Deceit. The Liberty of *Man*, there-

I.



fore, consists proportionably in the very same things; in his being free from all those false Biasses and corrupt Inclinations, which would cause his Will to decline from the Direction of Right Reason. And where This Liberty is preserved by good men to any considerable degree of Perfection, there the Holy Ghost is pleased to express itself in such manner even concerning *Them* also, as to affirm that they *cannot sin*, 1 Joh. iii. 9. Which expression is therefore so far from implying their having *no Liberty* of Will at all, as some have vainly imagined; that on the contrary It signifies their having their *Liberty so perfect*, in Imitation of God, as (abating the unavoidable infirmities of human Nature) to be in *no danger* of being biassed or seduced. This is what our Saviour promises in the Text, that if men will continue in his Word, then they *shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make them free*. And it sufficiently makes good the general Doctrine I at first drew from the Words; namely, that the *Religious Restraints* laid upon men by the Gospel, are really and truly the *greatest Liberty*;

Joh. viii.

32.

and the Service of God, the most perfect S E R M.
Freedom. I.

T H E R E are some other Senses in Scripture, of the Words *Liberty* and *Bondage*; which for the fuller understanding of the Text, in which they are all directly or indirectly comprehended, deserve briefly to be mentioned in this Place.

And 1st, CHRISTIAN *Liberty*, in many places of Scripture, and principally in St Paul's epistles, signifies deliverance from the Obligation of the Ceremonial law; from that Yoke, *which neither our* Acts xv.
Fathers, nor we, as it is elsewhere expressed, 10.
were able to bear. Of This it is that he speaks, when he tells us that we *have* Rom. viii.
not received the Spirit of Bondage again, 15.
but the Spirit of Adoption; that, *when we were children, we were in bondage under the Elements of the World,* Gal. iv. 3. that *the Lord is That Spirit*; and *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty,* 2 Cor. iii. 17. The expression is difficult, and has been much misunderstood: But the meaning is, that the Gospel is the Spirit and End of the Law; and where the Spirit, or thing signified is fulfilled, there the type, or bare letter, is superseded;

S E R M. *The Lord is that Spirit; and where the*

I.



Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.

Of This also he is to be understood in those places, where he advises Christians to be-

Gal. ii. 4. *ware of false brethren that would spie out their Liberty, and bring them again into*

v. 1. *bondage; to stand fast in the Liberty where-with Christ had made them free, and not be intangled again with the yoke of bondage;*

Gal. v. 13. *not to use Liberty for an occasion to the Flesh; to take heed lest by any means this*

1 Cor. viii. 9. *Liberty of theirs, became a stumbling-block to them that are weak: And accordingly*

concerning himself he declares in this re-

ix. 21. *spect, that To them that are without law, he became as without Law, yet being not*

without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ. The meaning is, that though

men were delivered by Christ, from the bondage of the ceremonial Law; yet were

they by no means discharged from any moral Obligations. And the same is the

intent of St Peter's Exhortation, 1 Pet. ii. 16. *As free, and yet not using your Li-*

berty for a cloke of Maliciousness, but as the Servants of God.

2dly. IN other places of Scripture, the Freedom of Christians, signifies their De-

liverance

liverance from the Bondage of that *Fear*, S E R M. I.
 which was the consequence of the Curse and Severity of the Law. Of the Wick-
 ed 'tis said, that they *flee, when no man pursueth*; and are in great *Fear*, even Prov. xxviii. 1. Ps. lxxxviii. 5.
where no Fear is. Not that they have no just Cause of Fear; but on the contrary because they have always so much reason to be afraid, that it often shows forth itself even upon improper occasions.

BUT further; even with regard to those, who are not notoriously wicked; their being under the Law, is in general called *the Spirit of Bondage to Fear*, Rom. viii. 15. And their Deliverance from that Fear by the gracious Terms of the Gospel, is stiled *the Spirit of Adoption*, whereby they cry *Abba Father*; whereby they apply to God, not as to a strict and severe Judge, but as to a merciful and reconciled Father. And our Lord is said to have delivered them, Heb. ii. 15. *who through Fear of Death were all their Lifetime subject to Bondage*.

3dly. THE Liberty of a Christian, may also sometimes very properly signify, his Deliverance from the Slavery of endless Superstition. Of the Prophets of *Baal* 'tis

S E R M. recorded, 1 Kings xviii. 28. that *they cried*
 I. *aloud, and cut themselves with knives and*
lancets, till the Blood gushed out upon them:
 And of some other Idolaters; that they
caused their own Children, to pass through
the Fire to Moloch. Those among the
 Heathen, who were less Cruel; yet were
 in perpetual Fear, of *Dreams* and *Omens*
 and vain *Presages*; and in continual Bon-
 dage to tedious and useless Observations,
 The Corrupters of Christianity, have af-
 ter the same Example, introduced an in-
 tolerable Burden of Pilgrimages and Ab-
 stinencies and voluntarily Humilities,
 which *Who has required at their Hands?*
 All which things when a reasonable man
 seriously considers, he may very properly
 ask himself that Question, which *Naa-*
man's servant put to his Master, 2 Kings v,
 13. *If God had bidden thee do some great*
thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How
much rather then, when he saith unto thee,
Wash and be clean; when he only saith
unto thee, Repent and amend.

BUT 4thly and lastly, That which it
 chiefly and above all signifies in Scrip-
 ture-pharse, is (what I have applied it
 to in the foregoing discourse) *Free-*
dom

dom from the Slavery of Sin, So the S E R M.
 Apostle expressly, Rom. vi. 18. *Being* I
then made Free from Sin, ye became the
Servants of Righteousness. Rom. viii. 2.
The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ
Jesus, has made me free from the law of
Sin and Death; and ver. 21. delivered
from the bondage of Corruption, into the
glorious liberty of the children of God. Where
 this *Liberty* is improved to any considera-
 ble degree, the person is said to be *dead to*
Sin; in opposition to those who on the
 contrary, for want of any improvement
 at all, are represented as *dead in Sin*.
 Rom. vi. 7. *He that is dead,* (or, as
 it is explained by an easier Phrase in the
 verse before, he in whom *the body of Sin*
is destroyed,) *is free from Sin*; and 1 Pet.
 iv. 1. *He that has suffered in the Flesh,*
 (*viz. he that has conquer'd his corrupt*
affections;) *has ceased from Sin.* That
 the Words, *suffered in the Flesh,* must in
 this place be understood thus, not literally
 but figuratively, appears evidently from
 the following Words, v. 2. *That he no*
longer should live the rest of his Time in
the Flesh, to the Lusts of Men, but to the
Will of God. The highest improvement
 and

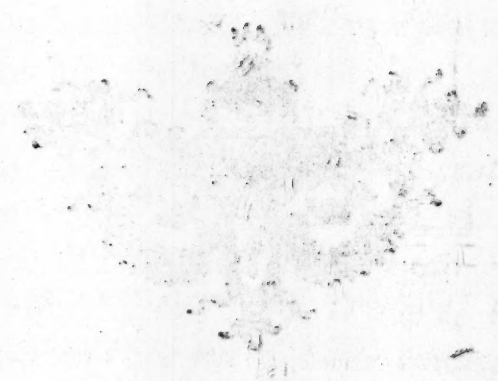
S E R M. and perfection of this Liberty in the present Life, is, when a man not only obeys the Commands of God, but does it habitually with ease and pleasure; when the *Commandments* of God seem *not grievous* to him, but the *yoke of Christ easy*, and his *burden light*; when he can *delight to know* the *Ways* of God, and *call* his *Sabbaths a delight*, *Is. lviii. 2, 13*; when he can say with *Job, ch. xxii. ver. 26*, that *he has his delight in the Almighty*; with the Psalmist, *Pf. i. 2. that his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law* *Ps. cxix. 14, 16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77. 174.* *doth he exercise himself day and night*; and with our Saviour himself, *Jo. iv. 34. My meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work.* When *This* is the Case, which is the highest pitch of Christian Perfection upon Earth; then may it be said of such a Person, that he *continueth in the perfect Law of Liberty*, *Jam. i. 25; ii. 12.* Then may he cry out with the Psalmist, *Pf. cxvi. 16. O Lord, I am thy servant and the son of thine handmaid, thou hast broken my Bonds in sunder; And I will walk at Liberty, for I seek thy commandments, Pf. cxix. 45.* Then is fulfilled That Prophecy, *Is. lxi. 1.* applied by our Saviour

Saviour to Himself, *Luk. iv. 18. He has* SERM.
anointed me to preach the Gospel to the I.
Poor,-----to preach deliverance to the cap- ~
tives,-----to set at Liberty them that are
bruised. Lastly, of such a Person, who
thus delights to do the Will of God, it
may be declared, though he *be a Servant,*
that yet *he is the Lord's free Man,* 1 Cor. vii.
22; that because *the Son has made him*
free, therefore he is free indeed, Jo. viii.
36; or (as it is in the Words of the Text,)
that *he knows the Truth, and the Truth*
doth make him Free.



SERMON

27. 11. 1871
[Faint, mostly illegible text, possibly a letter or report, with some words like "I have", "the", "and" visible.]

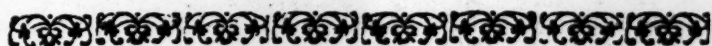


NOV 22 1871



S E R M O N II.

A Virtuous Mind the best Help to
understand True Religion.



DAN. xii. 10. latter part.

*And none of the Wicked shall un-
derstand; But the Wise shall
understand.*

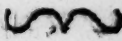


O seek a man's true and final S E R M.
Interest, by parting with some II.
present and inconsiderable Ad-
vantages for the sake of more
and much greater ones to
come, is the proper Act of *Wisdom*; and
the general Character of *Folly*, is the pur-
chasing some trivial present Benefit, at the
hazard

S E R M. hazard of much better and more valuable things in reversion. For This reason, in II. Scripture-phrafe, *Religion and Virtue* are almost always signified under the denomination of *Wisdom*; and *Folly*, is but another Name for *Sin*. The *Sinner* and the *Fool*, are always reciprocal Terms; and no man is stiled *Wise* by the Spirit of God, upon any other account than that of being *Religious*. For unto man he said; *The Fear of the Lord, That is Wisdom; and to depart from Evil, is Understanding*, Job xxviii. 28. And This is so much the known language of Scripture, that I need in this place but just mention it. Thus Eccles. ii. 13. *Then I saw*, says Solomon, that *Wisdom excelleth Folly, as far as Light excelleth Darknes*; the Meaning is, that Religion and Virtue is *as much more* excellent and more profitable to men than Wickedness, as one thing can be preferable to another. And in the Words of the Text; *None of the Wicked shall understand: But the Wise*, (those who are such in opposition to the Folly of Wickedness, that is, the *Righteous*) *shall understand*. I

to understand True Religion.

31

To *Understand*, may be taken in two SERM.
Senses; Either to signify the understand- II.
ing of these *particular* Prophecies; or 
the understanding the true nature of Re-
ligion in *general*. In *Both* these Senses,
the Words are very proper and emphati-
cal; and in *Both*, they are very remarka-
bly fulfilled. If we take them in the *for-*
mer Sense; *None of the Wicked shall un-*
derstand; i. e. none of them shall appre-
hend the true meaning and intent of these
Prophecies; *But the Wise*, viz. the *right-*
eous and well-disposed, the careful and dili-
gent inquirers, *shall understand* them: If
we take them, I say, in This Sense, then
They were very remarkably fulfilled up-
on the *Jews* in our Saviour's time; who,
notwithstanding that this Prophecy of
Daniel contained as clear a Prædiction as
could be desired, of the *Time* and *Manner*
of our Saviour's appearing in the Flesh;
yet through their obstinate prejudices a-
gainst *Him* and his *doctrine*, they resolved
not to see it: And because there were other
passages in the Prophecy, more *obscure*,
and *difficult* to be interpreted; therefore
they would by no means be perswaded to
understand what was *plain*. The like to
which,

S E R M. which, has exactly happened among *Chri-*
 II. *stians* also. For whereas, in the New Te-
 ~~~~~ stament, there are very many Prophecies,  
 and as express as can be; of a Man of  
 Sin to be revealed; of a general Defecti-  
 on and Apostacy in the latter times; of  
 a Worldly Power sitting in the Seat of  
 God, and presuming to change Laws and  
 Times, and compelling the *whole World*  
 to worship him by submitting to his arbi-  
 trary and unreasonable Power; and that  
 the Head of this Corruption is that great  
 City which ruleth over the Kingdoms  
 of the Earth: yet because there are  
 indeed other passages in the Prophetick  
 part of the New Testament, more ob-  
 scure and difficult; therefore those of the  
 Church of *Rome*, and as many as favour  
 their absurd pretensions, resolve they will  
 not understand the clearest Descriptions  
 of things; but *will* continue to make  
 Temporal Power, Riches and Grandeur,  
 a Mark or Note of the *True* Church;  
 when the Scripture on the contrary ex-  
 pressly makes it a Mark of the *False* one,  
 persecuting and scattering the true Wor-  
 shippers of God.

BUT



BUT *secondly*; if we take the Words S E R M.  
of the Text in the *latter* sense, to express II.  
Men's Understanding, not of these *parti-*  
*cular* Prophecies, but of the true Nature  
of Religion *in general*; they are then evi-  
dently fulfilled in the greater part of Men.  
*None of the Wicked understand; But the*  
*Wise, that is, the Righteous, do under-*  
*stand.* And This being the most *general-*  
*ly useful* Sense of the Words, I shall in  
the following Discourse consider them  
according to *This* Interpretation. And  
so the Proposition they contain, is This:  
That a *virtuous Disposition of Mind* is  
the *best Help*, and a *vitious inclination*  
the *greatest Hindrance*, to a right Under-  
standing of the *Doctrine of True Religion.*  
*None of the Wicked shall understand; But*  
*the Wise shall Understand.*

FOR the clearer Proof and Illustrating  
of which Proposition, it may be proper  
to consider distinctly the Two following  
particulars: 1<sup>st</sup>, What there is in the  
*Nature of Things themselves*; and 2<sup>dly</sup>,  
What there is in the positive *Appointment*  
of God; which makes a *virtuous Disposition*  
so great a *Help*, and a *vitious Inclination*

SERM. so great a *Hindrance*, to a *Right Under-*  
 II. *standing in Matters of Religion.*

IN the 1<sup>st</sup> place, there is something in the *Nature of Things themselves*, something in the very *Frame and Constitution of the Mind of Man*, something in the *Nature and Tendency of all Religious Truths*; which helps to verify the general Proposition. In a *Mind virtuously disposed*, there is a native *agreeableness* to the *Principles of True Religion*; in like manner as in a healthful *Body*, the *Organs* are fitted to their proper *Objects*; and as in the *Frame of the Material World*, every thing is suited and adjusted to its proper *Use and Employment*. A *well-disposed Mind* does as naturally entertain the great *Truths of Religion*, as the *Eye* discerns *Colours*, and the *Palate* relishes *Tastes*; or as good *Ground* receives good *Seed*, and feeds and nourishes it till it brings forth much *Fruit*. 'Tis our *Saviour's own Comparison*, St *Luk. viii. 15*. *Those on the good ground are they, who in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth Fruit with Patience.* And in other places of *Scripture*, persons of such a disposition

are, upon the same account, said to be, S E R M. II.  
 not *ordained*, as we falsely render the Word, but *prepared* or disposed for *eternal Life*; and that God daily added to his Acts xiii. 48.

Church, not *such as* should be *saved*, Acts ii. 47.

(though that also is true,) but *such as* were *saved*, (so the original Word signifies;) namely, such as were beforehand *qualified and well inclined*, to save themselves from a wicked generation, by embracing the Doctrine of the Gospel of Christ. Our Saviour elsewhere calls such

Persons his *Sheep, that will hear his Voice*; Joh. x. 27. vi. 44.

and says of them, that they are *Drawn* by his *Father*, before they *come to Him*; that is, that by a Love to the Truth of God *in general*, they are fitted to receive that Revelation of his Will, made by the Gospel *in particular*. In the Study of every *Humane Science*, there is some particular previous Temper, some certain Predisposition of Mind, which makes men fit for that particular Study, and apt to understand it with Easiness and Delight: Generally and Principally, a Love to that particular Science, and a high Esteem of its Value and Usefulness. The same holds true in proportion, in



S E R M. *Religious* Matters likewise. A general  
 II. love of Virtue; an equitable, fair, and  
 charitable Spirit; and a just Sense of the  
 Necessity and Reasonableness of obeying  
 God's Commands, is the first Principle  
 and Beginning of Religion; the best and  
 great preparative to open the Understand-  
 ing, to make men study with pleasure,  
 and comprehend with Ease, and judge  
 with right Discernment of Divine Truths.  
*The Fear of the Lord*, says the Psalmist, *is*  
*the Beginning of Wisdom: A good Under-*  
*standing have all they that do his Command-*  
*ments; The Praise thereof endureth for e-*  
*ver; Ps. cxi. 10.* And Solomon, who in  
 his Knowledge of the Workings of the  
 Mind of Man, as well as in other Scien-  
 ces, had no Superior, lays down the same  
 Maxim, *Prov. i. 7. The Fear of the Lord*  
*is the Beginning of Knowledge; and re-*  
*peats it again as the Foundation of all In-*  
*struction, ch. ix. ver. 10. The Fear of the*  
*Lord is the beginning of Wisdom; and*  
*the Knowledge of the Holy, is Understand-*  
*ing.* The Author of the Book of *Ecclus.*  
 with the variation of One Word only, ex-  
 presses likewise the same Sense; *ch. i.*  
*ver. 14, 20. The Root of Wisdom, is to*  
*fear*



*fear the Lord.* The Root; that is to say, S E R M. the first Ground and Principle, the first II. Capacity and Disposition to receive Religious Truths; that which makes the *Mind* susceptible and apt to apprehend them; that which makes *them* easy and pleasant to be understood. For *Wisdom* Wisd. vi. 16, 17, 14. goeth about, seeking such as are worthy of her; she sheweth herself favourably unto them in the Ways, and meeteth them in every thought: For the very true Beginning of her, is the desire of Discipline;-----And whoso seeketh her early, shall have no great travel, for he shall find her sitting at his Doors.

FURTHER; as a virtuous Disposition of Mind is the best preparative for beginning the Study of Religion; so Practice and Experience in the course of a Virtuous Life and in the Obedience of God's Commands, is in continuance the best information and perpetual improvement of a man's Understanding and Judgment in the Knowledge of Divine Truths. He that keepeth the Law of the Lord, getteth the Understanding thereof, says the wise Son of Sirach; and the perfection of the Fear of the Lord, is Wisdom, Ecclus. xxi. 11. E-

SERM. *vil men understand not judgment ; but they*  
 II. *that seek the Lord, understand all things,*  
 Prov. xxviii. 5. He that practises what he knows, improves his Knowledge continually by that Practise ; and by Actions, even more then by Speculation and Study, is the Understanding of practical Truths enlarged. In the common Affairs of the present Life, 'tis obvious that Men of Business, Experience and Diligence, are generally much better Judges in their proper Employments, than Others who for Parts and Learning may perhaps in other respects be esteemed much superior. And so it is likewise in Matters of Religion. Not the Wise and Crafty, not the learned and profound, not the subtle Arguers in Speculation and Dispute, are the best Instructors in the Duty of a Christian ; but, in these matters, rather *the mouth of the Just, (says Solomon,) bringeth forth Wisdom, and the Lips of the Righteous know what is acceptable,* Prov. x. 31, 32. There is a Spirit and a Life in the Discourse of a Righteous Man, proceeding from the Sincerity of an Upright Heart ; which no Skill nor Art can imitate. There is a Knowledge and Discernment arising from  
 virtuous

virtuous Practise, which another man cannot learn from him that has it, but by *going himself and doing likewise*. The Pure in Heart see God *here*, as well as *hereafter*, after *another* manner, than vicious and profane Philosophers argue about him. And as, with regard to *worldly* Employments, men of Parts and Learning can dispute and contend about them, without understanding them; but Those only are truly skilful, who have exercised themselves in the *Practise* of the particular Employments: So in *Religion*, there is no man truly wise and knowing, but he that has *lived* like a Christian, instead of disputing about it. When some of the Jews, moved with the Wisdom and Excellency of our Saviour's Discourses, believed on him by a sudden Impulse of unexperienced Affection; our Saviour, knowing the Weakness of the Ground of their Faith, said unto them, *If ye continue in my Word, then --- ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free*, St Joh. viii. 31; *free*, from the slavery of unreasonable Lusts and Passions; *free*, from the Darkness of Ignorance and Errors. *The Wise shall understand.*



S E R M.

II.



ON the contrary, in the Nature of *Vicious Inclinations*, and in the Practise of *all Wickedness*, there is something necessarily repugnant, something that in the nature of things will be a hindrance and impediment to a right Understanding in matters of Religion: *None of the Wicked shall understand.* A *vitious Disposition* blinds mens Eyes, corrupts their Principles, and subverts their Judgment; it causes, that men have *Eyes and see not, Ears and hear not, Understandings* and yet *do not understand.* They become vain in their *Imaginations*, as *St Paul* expresses it, *Rom. i. 21. and their foolish heart is darkned.* They have a *reprobate mind*, *Rom. i. 28.* The Word in the original signifies, an *injudicious mind*; a mind despoiled of its right Judgment, and of its natural Power of discerning. They have, as the same Apostle elsewhere elegantly describes them, *their Understandings darkned,---because of the Blindness of their Hearts.* A Person in this state; *the natural man*, as *St Paul* calls him; (so we render the Word, *1 Cor. ii. 14.* but it ought to be translated, *the Sensual man*;) *a man wholly taken up with the Cares and Pleasures* of

Eph. iv.  
18.



*to understand True Religion.*

41

*of the present Life; such a one receiveth* S E R M.  
*not the things of the Spirit of God, he un-* II.  
*derstands them not, has no relish of them;*  
*for they are foolishness unto him; neither*  
*can he know them, because they are spiri-*  
*tually discerned: spiritually discerned;*  
*i. e. discerned by Those only, who have*  
*Faculties to discern them with; by Those,*  
*whose Minds are not blinded with the*  
*Love of Wickedness. St John gives us*  
*an emphatical Instance of This in one*  
*particular Vice, that of Hatred or Ma-*  
*lice; which whosoever is 'addicted to,*  
*he tells us is no more capable of un-*  
*derstanding the Doctrine of the Gospel,*  
*that Doctrine of Love and universal*  
*Charity, than a man whose Eyes are*  
*shut, is able to discern the Light: He*  
*that hateth his Brother, is in darkness, and*  
*walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whi-*  
*ther he goeth, because that Darkness has*  
*blinded his Eyes, 1 Joh. ii. 11. No Words*  
*can express in a more lively and empha-*  
*tical manner, than this Description does,*  
*the incredible stupidity of such Christi-*  
*ans as think they do God good Service*  
*by persecuting one another, and expect*  
*to propagate the peaceable and charitable*  
*Doctrine*

S E R M. Doctrine of Jesus Christ by Arbitrariness,

II. Violence and Force. And the same may  
 be said, in proportion, of all *other* Vices.  
 Whosoever is engaged in *Any* vitious habit, he is thereby made *blind*, and *walketh in Darknes*. Our Saviour represents to us the same thing, by another the like elegant-similitude; comparing vitious men to persons that are *deaf* and *cannot hear*; St Joh. viii. 43. *Why do ye not understand my Speech? even because ye cannot hear my Words; For Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do.* The meaning of this difficult Text, by comparing it with that now cited from St *John's* First Epistle, appears very evident. For here our Saviour in a very expressive manner describes the unfitness of the malicious Pharisees to receive his Doctrine, by saying that they were *deaf* and *could not hear his Words*; just as St *John* in the other place represents the incapacity of uncharitable men to understand the Gospel, by declaring that they are *blind* and *walk in Darknes*. And when This is the Case, (as 'tis too plainly the Case of most Wicked men,) 'tis no wonder if they run into unaccountable

able Extravagancies. Hence, among the S E R M.  
*Heathen*, those who *knew God*, yet glo-

II.

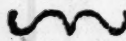
*rified him not as God*, but *changed the*  
*glory of the uncorruptible God into an*  
*image made like to corruptible man, and to*  
*birds and beasts and creeping things*, Rom.

i. 21. Hence the *Jews in the Wilderness*,  
 though they knew God, not only by the  
 Light of *Nature*, but by clear *Revelation*  
 also; yet even *They* likewise so far cor-  
 rupted themselves, as to *change their Glory*,  
*i. e. the True God*, whom *They* alone of  
 all Nations upon the Face of the Earth  
 had the Privilege more immediately  
 to serve; even *They* changed this their  
 Glory, *into the similitude of a Calf that*  
*eateth Hay*, Ps. cvi. 20. Hence the *Jews*  
*in our Saviour's time*, when they could  
 not deny the Greatness of his Miracles,  
 ascribed them to *Beelzebub the Prince of*  
*Devils*; and, after they had said, *Let him*  
*now come down from the Cross and we will*  
*believe him*, yet, after his Resurrection,  
 which was a much greater Miracle, they  
 still continued to disbelieve. Thus thro'  
*Blindness* it comes to pass, that *none of*  
*the Wicked do understand*.

BUT

SERM.

II.



BUT further: A Wicked disposition not only *blinds* men, and hinders them from considering, prevents their examining things, and causes them to overlook even the strongest Evidence; but it moreover *prejudices* them *Against* the Truth, and causes them even to *bate* it, and become professed *Enemies* to it. They hate *to be reformed*; and therefore *cast God's words behind them*, Pf. l. xvii. Their *car-nal mind* is even enmity *against* God; and therefore *is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be*, Rom. viii. 7. A person that gives them the best Advice in the World, may come to be looked upon as their *Enemy*, for that very reason *because he tells them the Truth*, Gal. iv. 16. They will knowingly chuse and love *Darkness rather than Light, because their deeds are evil*, St Joh. iii. 19. and reject the Truth for no other cause, but only because they *have pleasure in unrighteousness*, 2 Theff. ii. 12. And This is an effectual Reason indeed, why none of *such* wicked persons can *understand*. But where This is *not* the case, yet at least by any intervening worldly consideration, working upon their Ambition, Covetousness,

or



or any other Passion; they will certainly S E R M.  
be hindred from apprehending the Truth. II.

To the Question proposed, St *Joh.* vii. 48, *Have any of the Rulers or Pharisees believed on him?* the Answer is given, ch. xii. ver. 43, *They loved the praise of Men, more than the Praise of God;* and ch. v. ver. 44, *How can ye believe, which receive Honour one of another, and seek not the Honour which cometh from God only?* The 2 Cor. iii. 14.  
Jews, to this day, have the Veil remaining upon their Heart, principally through their expecting a temporal Messiah, to exalt them in the splendor and glory of this World: And 'tis too sad a Truth, that one of the principal *Hindrances* of the *Reformation* of erroneous Doctrines and Practices among Christians; such as *Transubstantiation*, *Purgatory*, *Indulgences*, *Prayers for the Dead*, and the like; is their being *profitable* to, and tending to promote unreasonable and unjust *Power* in those that maintain them. Where such Worldly Interests and Passions interpose, 'tis no wonder that men understand not the Force even of the strongest reasoning: *They are like the deaf Adder that stoppeth her Ear; which refuseth to hear*

S E R M. *the voice of the charmer, charm he never*

II. *so wisely, Pf. lviii. 4. There is One thing further, and not so commonly taken notice of, by which an Evil Disposition hinders right Understanding in matters of Religion; and That is, that it promotes contentious Disputes about needless Intricacies, for the sake of Pride, Vain-glory or Profit; and in order to impose upon other mens Belief uncertain Opinions, which confound and darken the plainest*

Tit. iii. 9. *Truths. These St Paul calls foolish questions----and contentious----which are un-*

2 Tim. ii. 14. *profitable and vain; striving about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the*

1 Tim. vi. 20. *Hearers; profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of Science falsely so called, and*

2 Tim. ii. 16. *which will increase unto more ungodliness; profane and old-wives fables; Fables and*

1 Tim. iv. 7. *commandments of Men, that turn from the*

Tit. i. 14. *Truth; foolish and unlearned questions, that*

2 Tim. ii. 23. *gender strifes; Fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than*

1 Tim. i. 4. *godly edifying. And persons who by Heat and Dogmaticalness, and by Zeal for un-*

*certain Opinions without due inquiry and examination, cause or promote such Contentions; he calls proud, knowing nothing, but*

but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, rail-ings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the Truth, supposing that gain is Godliness, 1 Tim. vi. 4; and declares that they have a Form only of Godliness, but deny the Power thereof; ----- resisting the Truth, being men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the Faith, 2 Tim. iii. 5, 8. Which natural Effects of Contentiousness and vain Disputes in order to impose upon each other our own Opinions, are probably in great part the true reason from whence it comes to pass, that *not many wise men after the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; But God has chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty; 1 Cor. i. 26. Not many wise men after the Flesh; i. e. not many of those whom the World generally esteemed wise, for their being able by subtle disputes to perplex and make intricate even the plainest Truths; but the men of Integrity and Plainness, of Sincerity and Simplicity of Heart, men of fair and equitable Principles,*

SERM.  
II.



S E R M.

II.

1 Cor. iii.

18.

ples, universally charitable and Lovers of Mankind, *These* were the Persons that embraced the Gospel of Christ. And this seems to be the Ground and Meaning of that affectionate Thanksgiving of our Saviour's, St Matt. xi. 25, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the Wise and Prudent, (that is, from the Cunning or Crafty,) and hast revealed them unto Babes; (to Men of unprejudiced Plainness and uncorrupt Integrity;) Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight: And of his declaring accordingly to his Disciples, St Luk. xviii. 17, Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child, shall in no wise enter therein.*

AND thus much concerning the first general Head, namely, what there is in the Nature of Things Themselves, which makes a virtuous *Disposition* so great a *Help*, and a vicious *Inclination* so great a *Hindrance*, to a right Understanding in matters of Religion.

THE second thing to be considered, was, What there is moreover in the positive Appointment and Constitution of God, by



by which we are assured that *None of* S E R M.  
*the Wicked shall understand, but the Wise* II.  
(in opposition to the Folly of Wick-  
edness, i. e. *the Righteous*) *shall under-*

*stand.* And here the Scripture declares,  
1st, in general, that by *some* means or  
other, by *some* or *other* Method of Pro-  
vidence in the Government of the World,  
God *will* take care, that righteous and  
piously-disposed persons *shall* attain to *so*  
*much* Understanding as is *necessary* for  
their own particular Salvation: That *the*  
*Meek*, God *will* guide in Judgment; and  
*such as are gentle*, *them* he *will* teach his  
way, Ps. xxv. 9. That God *will* give to  
a man that is good in his fight, *Wisdom*,  
and *Knowledge*, and *Joy*, Eccles. ii. 26.  
That though *Heaven* is his *Throne*, and  
*Earth* his *Footstool*, yet on such a one he  
*will* vouchsafe to look, even on him that  
is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trem-  
bleth at his *Word*, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. That if  
any man *will* do his *Will*, he shall know  
of the doctrine whether it be of God, St Job.  
vii. 17. And upon *this* are founded those  
frequent exhortations in Scripture, *Prov.*  
ii. 1, 5; *My Son*, if thou *wilt* receive my  
*Words*, and hide my *Commandments with*  
V O L. III. E thee,

S E R M. *thee;----- then shalt thou understand the*

II. *fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God;----- For the Lord giveth Wisdom,----- he layeth up sound Wisdom for the Righteous. Again, Eccus. i. 26. If thou desire Wisdom, keep the Commandments, and the Lord shall give her unto thee; For the Fear of the Lord is Wisdom and Instruction, and Faith and Meekness are his delight. St Jam. i. 5. If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask of God,----- and it shall be given him: And Ephes. v. 14. Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, (viz. from the Death of Sin,) and Christ shall give thee Light. St Paul himself was a great example of this Doctrine; whom, because of the sincerity of his Zeal, God was pleased to convert even by a Miracle: For having been so imposed upon as to think that Religion could be propagated by Persecution and Violence, he justly stiled himself the greatest of Sinners. But yet for the sincerity of his Intention, the pious Centurion *Cornelius*, was instructed by an Angel sent from Heaven; and the *Ethiopian Eunuch* was taught by an Apostle sent to him on purpose; And concerning *all* the Disciples, when*

when one of them asked our Lord, *How* S E R M.  
*is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to Us,* II.  
*and not unto the World?* He replied,  
*St Job. xiv. 23. If a man love me, he will*  
*keep my Words, and my Father will love*  
*him, and we will come unto him, and make*  
*our abode with him.*

But 2dly, T H E Scripture declares fur-  
 ther in particular, that, by the *secret as-*  
*sistance of his Holy Spirit,* God will pe-  
 culiarly direct and enlighten those that  
 are truly sincere. I Job. ii. 20, Ye have  
*an Unction from the Holy One, and ye know*  
*all things.* Again, *Acts v. 32, ----- the*  
*Holy Ghost, which God has given to them*  
*that obey him: ---- the Holy Ghost, who*  
*is the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit given*  
*first to the Apostles, and afterwards to*  
*all good men in proportion, to lead them*  
*into all (that is, into all necessary) Truth.*  
 And This, I suppose, is the meaning of  
 those passages of Scripture: *The froward*  
*is an abomination to the Lord; but his Se-*  
*cret is with the righteous.* Prov. iii. 32.  
*The Secret of the Lord is with them that*  
*fear him, and he will show them his Cove-*  
*nant,* Pf. xxv. 14. And *Many are in high*  
 VOL. III. E 2 places,

SERM. places, and of renown; but Mysteries are  
 II. revealed unto the Meek, Ecclus. iii. 19.

ON the contrary, where there is a *vitious Inclination* and an *Affection to Wickedness*; there mens minds are not only blinded by the natural consequence of such a disposition, but God moreover withdraws his Spirit from them, and the Holy Ghost will not dwell in a Heart that takes pleasure in Unrighteousness. *For into a malicious Soul Wisdom shall not enter, nor dwell in the Body that is subject unto Sin; For the Holy Spirit of Discipline will flee deceit, and remove from Thoughts that are without Understanding, and will not abide when Unrighteousness cometh in, Wisd. i. 4.* Nay, not only so; but, where men are obstinately incorrigible, God is represented in Scripture as justly giving them up in judgment to be deceived by the *Evil One*, that for a deserved punishment they may increase unto more Ungodliness. *Rev. xx. 8, Satan is described as being let loose, that he may go out to deceive the Nations: And the destruction of Wicked Ahab, is thus eloquently represented in a most lively Image by the Prophet Micah,*



isaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 19, I saw the Lord SERM.  
 sitting on his throne, and all the host of II.  
 Heaven sitting by him on his right hand  
 and on his left. And the Lord said, Who  
 shall persuade, (in the original it is, Who  
 shall deceive) Ahab, that he may go up  
 and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? and one said  
 on this manner, and another said on that  
 manner. And there came forth a Spirit,  
 and stood before the Lord, and said, I  
 will persuade him; And the Lord said  
 unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will  
 go forth, and be a lying Spirit in the  
 mouth of all his Prophets; And he said,  
 Thou shalt persuade him and prevail al-  
 so; Go forth, and do so. The Represen-  
 tation is highly figurative, and by no  
 means to be understood literally; But  
 the meaning is, that God justly permits  
 Wicked men, when they obstinately re-  
 fuse to hear Him, he permits them to be  
 deceived by the Evil One to their own  
 destruction. The like expression is used;  
 Judg. ix. 23, God sent an Evil Spirit be-  
 tween Abimelech and the men of Shechem:  
 The meaning is, as it is explained in the  
 following words, God permitted Abime-  
 lech to be deceived and dealt treacherously

S E R M. *with* by the men of *Skechem*, that his  
 II. *cruelty* and the *blood* which he had shed  
 might *come upon* him. 'Tis nothing more,  
 but an acknowledgment of the Justice  
 and Wisdom of Providence, in suffering  
 Wicked men to be judicially blinded, that  
 they may fall according to their deserts.  
*With him is Strength and Wisdom, the*  
*Deceived and Deceiver are his; ----- He*  
*removeth away the Speech of the Trusty,*  
*and taketh away the Understanding of the*  
*Aged from them: Job xii. 16, 20. The*  
*Heathen World, because they did not like*  
*to retain God in their Knowledge, there-*  
*fore God gave them up to Uncleanneſs,*  
*and to vile affections, and to a reprobate*  
*(i. e. an undiscerning) mind, Rom. i. 24,*  
*26, 28. Joſh. xi. 20. Deut. ii. 30. Pha-*  
*raoh, because of his obstinate Wicked-*  
*neſs, God bardned his Heart, i. e. ſuffered*  
*his Understanding to be more and more*  
*blinded, that he ſhould not ſee the Ten-*  
*dency of God's wonderful Judgments*  
*worked in Egypt. The ſame Phraſe is*  
*uſed of the people of the Jews, Iſ. lxiii.*  
*17, Thou haſt bardned our Heart from*  
*thy Fear; or, as it is, ch. vi. 10, Make*  
*the Heart of this people fat, ----- leſt they*  
*underſtand*

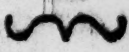
*understand with their Heart, and convert* S E R M.  
*and be healed. The Meaning is expressed* II.  
at large, ch. xxix. 13, 10, *Forasmuch as*  
*this people draw near me with their mouth,*  
*----- but have removed their Heart far*  
*from me; Therefore, behold, I will pro-*  
*ceed to do a marvellous work among this*  
*people;----- The Wisdom of their Wise men*  
*shall perish, and the understanding of their*  
*prudent men shall be hid;----- The Lord*  
*has poured out upon you the Spirit of deep*  
*sleep, and has closed your eyes. And Ezek.* Rom. xi.  
*xiv. 5, 6, 9, Because they are all estranged* 8.  
*from me by their Idols, Therefore say*  
*unto the house of Israel,----- If a pro-*  
*phet be deceived when he has spoken a thing,*  
*I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and*  
*I will stretch out my hand upon him, and*  
*will destroy him from the midst of my peo-*  
*ple Israel. The like expressions are used*  
*in the New Testament, concerning corrupt*  
*Christians; He that is unjust, let him be* Rev. xii.  
*unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him* 11.  
*be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let*  
*him be righteous still; and he that is holy,*  
*let him be holy still. And God shall put it* Rev. xvii.  
*into their hearts, to deliver their Kingdom* 17.  
*and Power unto the Beast. And 2 Thess.*

SERM. ii. 10, *Because they received not the Love of the Truth,——— for this cause God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lye; That they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness: And, 2 Tim. iii. 13, Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. All which passages, are as it were Paraphrases and Illustrations of the Words of the Text; None of the Wicked shall understand, but the Wise shall understand.*

FROM what has been said, we may infer, 1<sup>st</sup>, That *Wicked* men have no reason to complain, for their not being able to understand Religion; and *Infidels* no Excuse, for their not believing it. For God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darknes, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the light of the Knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of *Jesus Christ*: But if our Gospel be hid, 'tis hid to them that are lost; In whom the God of this World has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of *Christ*, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them, 2 Cor. iv. 6, 3, 4.

2<sup>dly</sup>,



2dly, FROM hence appears the Reason SERM.  
of our Saviour's speaking so much in Pa- II.  
rables. To the *Wise* and well-disposed,   
it was given to know the *Mystery of the*  
*Kingdom of God*; but to others (*i. e.* to  
the *Wicked*) he spake in *Parables*, that  
*seeing they might not see, and hearing they*  
*might not understand*: And thence our  
Saviour so frequently at the end of his  
Parables cried out; *He that has Ears to*  
*hear, let him hear*; and, *He that can re-*  
*ceive it, let him receive it*. And *be that*  
*hath an Ear, let him hear, what the Spirit*  
*saith unto the Churches*.

3dly, FROM what has been said, we  
may observe, how it comes to pass, that  
*Faith*, which is generally looked upon  
as an Act of the *Understanding*, and so  
not in our own Power, is yet in the  
*New Testament* always required and insist-  
ed upon as a *Moral Virtue*. The reason  
is, because *Faith*, in the Scripture-sense,  
is not barely an Act of the *Understand-*  
*ing*, but a mixt Act of the *Will* also;  
consisting very much in that *Simplicity*  
and *Unprejudiceness* of Mind, which our  
Saviour calls *receiving the Kingdom of*  
*God*

SERM. *God as a little child*; in that freedom from guile and deceit, which was the character of *Nathaniel*, an *Israelite* indeed; and in that *teachable disposition* or *Desire to know the Will of God*, for which the *Bereans* were so highly commended, who *searched the Scriptures daily*, whether those things the *Apostle* taught, were so or not. They are commended for not believing on the *Authority* even of the *Apostles*. But

4thly, FROM hence it appears, that there is no need of an *Infallible Guide on Earth*, or of an *unerring Church*. For all necessary Truth is sufficiently made known in Scripture; and one great part of our *Christian Duty*, is to *study* the Will of God with such a Disposition of Mind, as may entitle us to the Promise given in the Text, that *the Wise shall understand*.

5thly and Lastly, YET This must be so understood, as to be a Security, not against *All*, but against *Fatal Mistakes*. The best and piouslest persons, may in many things err; but their *Errors* cannot be dangerous, or of final ill consequence: For

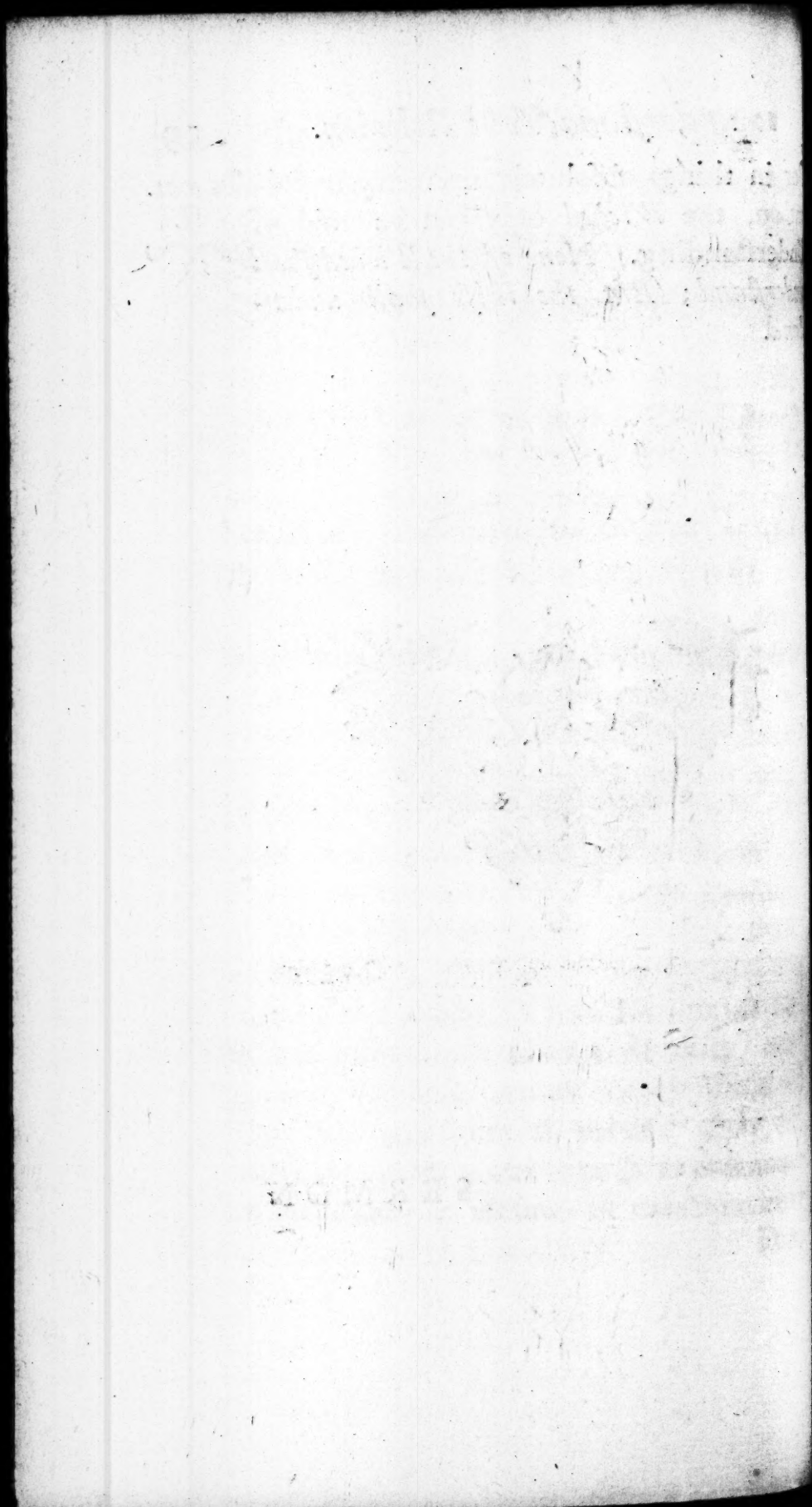
*to understand True Religion.*

59

or in things absolutely necessary to Sal-  
vation, the *Wicked* only can be void of  
Understanding. *None of the Wicked shall*  
*understand; But the Wise shall under-*  
*stand.*



S E R M O N







# S E R M O N III.

The Practice of Morality leads to  
the Practice of the Gospel.



JOH. vi. 44.

*No man can come to Me, except  
the Father which has sent Me,  
draw him.*



THE Duty and Happiness of SERM. III.  
rational Creatures, is the  
Practice of Righteousness and  
true Virtue, founded upon a  
Belief of the Being and Go-  
vernment of God; whose *Kingdom* over  
rational Creatures consists, in the confor-  
mity of their Wills and Actions to the  
Nature

SER M. Nature and Life of God; each in their

III. several Stations, according to the Degree  
 of Light and Knowledge which they enjoy, endeavouring to approve themselves to him by a chearful obedience to his Commands; and constantly promoting the Great Ends of his Government by preserving the Harmony of the *Moral* World, in like manner as the Wisdom of his Government over the *Natural and Material* World is shown forth in the regularity of all its Motions. By *Sin*, Moral Agents oppose and bring disorder into this Kingdom of God; which the inferior part of the Creation, having no Liberty of Choice, is not capable of doing. And they who thus oppose God's Kingdom of righteousness, become thereby *Enemies* to God, and alienated from his Favour. Nevertheless, man being a frail and fallible Creature; liable to be seduced, tempted and deceived; and there being, in the case of most Sinners, many Circumstances to excite Pity and Compassion; therefore God does not immediately cast them off, but generally allows them Space and Time for Repentance. And for this very End did he send his Son, our Lord Jesus

Christ, into the World; that, inviting S E R M.  
men to Repentance, declaring to them III.  
more distinctly the Malignity of Sin, gi-  
ving them the fullest Assurances of Par-  
don (upon their real and sincere Amend-  
ment) through the Merit of his own  
once offering himself a Sacrifice for ever,  
and revealing to them more clearly the  
Certainty of a future Judgment, and the  
Rewards and Punishments of the Life to  
come, he might by these means reduce  
them to the Obedience of God's Com-  
mands, and consequently restore them  
to the Divine Favour. *Christ has once*  
*suffered for Sins, the just for the unjust,*  
*that he might bring us to God,* 1 Pet. iii.  
18. And Col. i. 21. *You that were some-*  
*times alienated, and enemies in your mind*  
*by wicked works, yet now hath he reconci-*  
*led in the body of his Flesh through death,*  
*to present you holy and unblameable and*  
*unreproveable in his Sight.* But then we  
must here carefully observe, that in like  
manner as God *originally* and *from the*  
*Beginning,* while the *inanimate* world o-  
beys him absolutely and by necessity of  
Nature, would not compel the Obedience  
of *rational* Creatures by the irresistible-  
ness

SERM. ness of his Power, but exacted it only  
 III. from the willing Compliance of their  
 own Choice; so *now likewise* in the *re-*  
*storation* of men by *Christ*, he will have  
 no one reduced to his obedience by *Force*,  
 but by such Motives as work properly  
 upon rational Agents, *Reason* and *Argu-*  
*ments*, *Promises* and *Threatnings*, *Hopes*  
 and *Fears*. Thus in the Old Testament;  
*I taught Ephraim to go*, says God by the  
 Prophet, *taking them by their arms*, but  
*they knew not that I healed them*; *I drew*  
*them with Cords of a man*, *with bands of*  
*Love*, and *I was to them as they that take*  
*off the yoke*, Hof. xi. 3. And in the Go-  
 spel; *No man*, says our Saviour in the  
 words of the Text, *can come to Me*, *ex-*  
*cept the Father, which has sent me*, draw  
*him*: No man can be a worthy Disciple  
 of *Christ*, if he has not first upon his  
 mind a due sense of God. No man can  
 be a sincere Follower of the *Son of God*,  
 who is not in a disposition of being *drawn*  
 to a Love of Virtue, and of being *pre-*  
*vailed upon* to practise Righteousness, by a  
 Sense of the *Goodness* and *Reasonableness*  
 and *Excellency* of the eternal Laws of  
 God, even the *Father*, who sent him.

FOR



FOR the clearer and more distinct ex-  
plication of which doctrine, and of our  
Lord's full Meaning and Intention in  
these words; it will be proper to consider  
particularly,

S E R M.  
III.  
~

*First, WHAT is meant by the Phrase of Coming to Christ: No Man can Come to Me, except the Father which has sent me draw him. Some enthusiastick persons, judging of the Sense of this Phrase merely from the conceptions of their own imagination, and not from its Use and clear Signification in other passages of the same Writings; (which indeed is the only possible way of Understanding the true meaning either of Scripture, or of any book whatsoever :) and Others negligently following Their Interpretation, have supposed that Coming to Christ means a relying or depending upon His Merits and Satisfaction, to bring them to Salvation, whether they obey his Commandments by a virtuous Course of Life, or no. But whoever considers the many Passages of Scripture, in which this expression is to be met with, cannot fail to observe, that it really signifies quite another thing. Heb. xi. 6, He that cometh to God, must*

S E R M. *believe that he Is, and that he is a Rewarder*  
 III. *of them that diligently seek him : Coming*  
 to God here evidently expresses the same  
 thing, *as diligently seeking him : And, di-*  
*ligently seeking him, is the same as sincerely*  
*desiring to know and obey his Will, in order*  
*to please him. Again, ch. vii. 25. Christ is*  
*able to save to the uttermost them that come*  
*unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to*  
*make intercession for them : Coming unto God*  
*by Christ, is, Sinners returning by Repen-*  
*tance and real Amendment to the Obedi-*  
*ence of God's Commands, in hopes of ob-*  
*taining pardon for what is past, through the*  
*intercession of Christ. In like manner*  
*therefore, Coming unto Christ, signifies*  
*also serving and obeying Him, becoming*  
*his Disciples, believing his doctrine and li-*  
*ving according to it, sincerely desiring to*  
*understand and practise his Will : Joh. vi.*  
*35. He that cometh to me, shall never*  
*hunger ; he that believes and obeys the*  
*Gospel, shall never want any thing ne-*  
*cessary towards his obtaining eternal Life.*  
 And thus likewise in the words of the  
 Text ; *No man can come to Me, No*  
*Man can be a worthy disciple of Christ,*  
*no Man can be a true and sincere Christi-*

an; *except the Father which has sent me, draw him.* And This is the SERM.  
III.

*Second* thing to be considered in the Text; the meaning of these *latter* words, *except the Father, which has sent me, draw him.* Which expression, many Writers in Divinity have so understood, as if thereby was signified, that no man had it in his own Power to become a good Christian, or to perform any good Action; but that every Act of Virtue, was operated or produced in him by the immediate Power of God. And thus much of Truth there is indeed in That Notion; that neither in any *religious*, nor in any *natural* action, does any one perform any thing, but by a Power freely given him from, and entirely depending upon, the good pleasure of God. *In Him*, and by virtue of Powers and Faculties continually depending *upon* him, *we live and move and have our Being*, and perform all, even the *natural* Actions of Life. In the execution of *Civil Power and Authority*, or of any *Office* whatsoever, there is still further, not only a continual dependance upon the Will of God for the use of men's *natural Faculties*; but moreover a dependance upon God's general Providence in

68      *The Practice of Morality leads*

S E R M. the Government of the World, to order  
 III. things so, as that the *Authority*, whatever it is, may actually take place : Thus *Pilate* could have had *no Power* to judge or condemn our Lord, or any other person, except it were given him from above, Joh. xix. 11. And the *Baptist* in This sense well expresses the *Success* of his Own Ministry, *A man can receive nothing*, says he, *Joh. iii. 27. except it be given him from Heaven.* In religious matters still further, 'tis not only true, that 'tis God who giveth us both to will and to do of his good pleasure ; that 'tis God from whom alone we receive the *rational Faculties*, or *Powers*, both of *choosing and acting* ; but moreover, that 'tis owing to his superabundant *grace and favour*, to his *free Gift and undeserved Bounty in Christ*, that he has afforded us the *Benefit* of a *Revelation*, the *Advantage* of a clearer and more express declaration of his *Will*, the *Assistances* of his *Holy Spirit*, an *Authoritative Assurance* of *Pardon* upon *Repentance*, and a more complete *Discovery* of the *Rewards* and *Punishments* in the *future State*, than could be obtained by the bare *Light of Nature*. All This, I say,



say, is unquestionably true ; and ought to S E R M.  
be continually and thankfully acknowledg- III.

ed, with a just and humble sense of our Dependence upon God in every thing that we Are, or Do. But it is *not* the Meaning of the *Text* before us, nor what our Saviour is at all here speaking of in this whole Discourse. For where any one is exhorting men to *act*, and pressing them to *perform their Duty* ; 'tis not *there* a *proper Argument or Incitement to Diligence*, (though it is undoubtedly in itself a certain Truth,) to tell them they can do nothing at all, unless God give them Power ; but the *proper Motive* is to assure them, that because God *has* actually given them *Power*, therefore he *expects* and *requires* it of them, that they should *act* accordingly. Thus St Paul argues to the *Philippians*, ch. ii. 12. *Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling ; For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.* The meaning plainly is ; God *has* given you Power to choose and act, *therefore* work out your own Salvation. And for the same reason, when our Saviour, in the *Text*, tells the unbelieving *Jews*, by

S E R M. way of *Reproof* for their obstinate Infidelity, and not by way of *pitying* them for any Want of Power to do their Duty; when he tells them (I say) by way of *Reproof* for their unreasonable Infidelity, that *no man can come to Him, except the Father draw him*; 'tis very certain he does not by these words mean to express any *Act* of God upon *Them*, but some certain *affection* or *disposition* of *Theirs* with regard to God.

F O R the further clearing of which explication of our Lord's sense, 'tis to be observed in the general nature of language, that when *Any Person* or *Thing* is said to *draw* another, the word (*draw*) may with equal propriety of Speech, signify either the *Action* of *Him* who *draws* the Other, or the *Action* of the *Other* who is *drawn* by him. And that, both in Scripture and in vulgar language, it *much more frequently* signifies the Action of *Him* who is *drawn*, than of *Him* who *draws*, will appear most evidently, and beyond All contradiction, from the following considerations. Our Saviour discoursing with the *Jews*, *Joh. xii. 32.* And *I*, says he, *if I be lifted up from the Earth, will*  
draw

*to the Practice of the Gospel.*

71

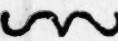
S E R M.  
III.

draw *all men unto me* : His meaning clearly is, not to express any *Act* of his *Own* upon Men; but that, after his crueifixion, many nations and people, convinced by the Excellency of his doctrine, and by the Miracles it was attended with, should by *their own Will and Act* embrace his Religion. In like manner when God by the Prophet declared concerning the *Israelites* of old, *Jer. xxxi. 3. With loving Kindness have I drawn thee*, and *Hos. xi. 4. I drew them with Cords of a man, with Bands of Love*; every one sees the Meaning to be This only, that the consideration of the kindness and love of God, shown forth to the *Israelites* in so many eminent Instances of Mercy, was a very strong reason to prevail with them to obey and serve him cheerfully. The sense is the very same, as in that of *St Paul*, *2 Cor. v. 14. The Love of Christ constraineth us*; which is a stronger expression than that of *drawing us*: *The Love of Christ*, says he, *constrains or compels us*, -----*that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us, and rose again.* A sense of *Gratitude*, draws Us; Acts of *Kindness, Love and*

SERM. *Good-will, from One Person to another, do*  
 III. *very strongly draw men; The Beauty and*  
*Excellency, the Goodness and usefulness of*  
*Things, draws or persuades them: We*  
*are drawn, by Arguments and Reasons, by*  
*Promises and Threatnings, by Hopes and*  
*Fears; Yet 'tis not that these things are*  
*Agents, but that we ourselves act, when*  
*we are said to be drawn by them. Much*  
*after the same manner of speaking, Men*  
*are said to be moved (or drawn) with*  
*compassion, Matt. ix. 36. moved with in-*  
*dignation, Matt. xx. 24. moved with En-*  
*vy, Acts vii. 9. moved with Fear, Heb. xi.*  
*7. And when St Paul had reckoned up*  
*the things which are generally apt to af-*  
*fect Men most strongly, yet None of these*  
*things (says he) move Me, Acts xx. 24.*  
*After the same manner, in the Ill sense of*  
*the word, Men are described to be drawn*  
*away with their own Lust, and enticed,*  
*Jam. i. 14. and David is represented as*  
*having been moved by Satan to number*  
*the people, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. And yet nei-*  
*ther the one nor the other expression were*  
*at all intended to signify, that the things*  
*done were not the persons Own Acts. Di-*  
*rectly on the contrary, the Scripture*  
 plainly



plainly means, severely to *blame* the One, S E R M.  
*acting* upon the incitement of *Lust*; and the III.  
 Other, for *acting* upon the Suggestions of  
 the *Devil*. Thus therefore in the *Text*  
 likewise, when our Lord says, *No man*  
*can come to Me, except the Father, which*  
*has sent me, draw him*; 'tis reasonable and  
 necessary to understand him as speaking,  
 not concerning any *Act* of God upon men,  
 but concerning the *Affection* which *Some*  
*men* bear towards God. For as 'tis not a  
*misfortune*, but a *Vice*, for a Man to be  
*drawn away* by his own *Lust*, and enticed;  
 and St *Peter's* expostulation with *Ananias*,  
*Why hath Satan filled thine heart*, is not by  
 way of *Excuse*, but by way of *aggravating*  
 his crime: So neither on the *other side*, is  
 it any declaration of *Fate*, but a high com-  
 mendation of Men's *Virtue*, to say that they  
 were *drawn* to their Duty, or prevailed with  
 to perform it, by consideration of *God*. In-  
 deed, *without* consideration of *God*, without  
 a continual *View* and *Regard* towards *Him*  
 as Governing the World, there *can* be no  
 such thing as *True Virtue*: No man *can*  
 become a *true and good Christian*, without  
 first having a *Sense* of the original *natu-*  
*ral* obligation he lies under, of *Love and*  
*Duty*

SERM. *Duty towards God: No man can come to*  
 III. *Me, except the Father, who has sent me,*  
 *draw him. And This sense of the phrase,*  
*our Saviour himself confirms by the words*  
*immediately following: For so he ex-*  
*pressly adds in the very next verse, Every*  
*man that hath heard, and hath learned of*  
*the Father, cometh unto Me; Every one*  
*that has a just sense, and suitable Practice,*  
*of natural Religion towards God; will*  
*be disposed readily to embrace the Doc-*  
*trine of Christ.*

THERE is *another* expression very frequent in Scripture, which may help much to illustrate the manner of speaking in the Text. The same Disciples of Christ, who are here said to be *drawn* to him by the Father, are elsewhere frequently described as being *given* to him of God. *Heb. ii. 13, I, and the children whom God has given me.* And again, *Joh. xvii. 2, Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* Now that even *This phrase* does not denote any *Action* of God upon men, but merely the *character* or *qualifications* of the persons described; is apparent from  
 the

the *parallel* places of Scripture. *All that* S E R M.  
III.  
*the Father giveth me, Joh. vi. 37. are, in*  
*the 40th verse, every one which seeth the*  
*Son, and believeth on him:* And they to  
*whom it is not given of the Father to come*  
*to Christ, ver. 65; are they whom, in*  
*the verse before, our Lord reproves for*  
*their unreasonable obstinacy in not belie-*  
*ving.* And when in his Prayer to the  
 Father, ch. xvii. 12, he says, *those that*  
*thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of*  
*them is lost, but the Son of perdition;* 'tis  
 plain by That exception, that Judas was  
 originally one of those, whom God had  
 given to Christ, in the same sense as he  
 gave him the rest of his Disciples; and  
 yet afterwards, by his own Fault, by be-  
 coming a Son of Treachery, *i. e.* a wick-  
 ed and traiterous person, he ceased to be  
 of that number. Just as, in *Acts xxvii.*  
*24, God had given to St Paul all those*  
*that sailed with him;* and yet he declares,  
*ver. 31, Except these abide in the ship, ye*  
*cannot be saved.*

By a not much unlike figure of Speech,  
 such persons as *voluntarily* undertake ex-  
 traordinary Difficulties for the Kingdom  
 of Heaven's sake, *Matt. xix. 12;* are, in  
 the

S E R M. the verse before, stiled *those to whom it is*  
 III. given. And, 'Tis given unto you, says our  
 Lord to his Disciples, ch. xiii. 11, *to know*  
*the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven;*  
 because *seeing, ye see,* (that is, ye see  
 without Prejudice;) and *bearing, ye bear*  
*and understand,* ver. 13. And concerning  
 those of a *contrary* Disposition, the Scrip-  
 ture says that they are *blinded;* that God  
*hath given them eyes that they should not*  
*see, and ears that they should not bear;*  
 nay, that God *sends them strong Delusion.*  
 And Moses, in a most affectionate man-  
 ner of expostulation, complains of the  
*Israelites, Deut. xxix. 4,* that after all the  
*Great things that their eyes had seen, the*  
*Signs of those Great Miracles, yet the*  
*Lord had not given them an heart to per-*  
*ceive, and eyes to see, and ears to bear,*  
*even unto That day.* Nothing is more  
 evident, than that the meaning of these  
 Complaints is, not that God was *wanting*  
*in his assistance,* much less that he actu-  
 ally operated upon men to make them *stu-*  
*pidly and ungratefully wicked;* but that,  
 through their *own* Obstinacy and Per-  
 verseness, the Means which God had been  
 pleased to make use of to reclaim them,  
 had



had always proved ineffectual; and all the great and marvellous things which he had done for them in *Egypt* and in the Wilderness, had not prevailed with them to repent, had not *drawn* them (as our Saviour in the Text expresses it) to the Obedience expected of them. And the same thing may in the like sense too justly be said at this day, concerning many among *Us*. God has by a long series of very marvellous Events delivered *Us* from That greatest of All Temporal calamities, the establishment of Popery and Arbitrary Power, by which Other Great and (in other respects) Wise nations have been reduced under the vilest Indignities of the most irrational and inhumane Slavery: And yet *the Lord hath not given us an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, even unto This day.*

FROM what has been said in explication of the phrases made use of in the Text, the general *Doctrine* it contains is plainly this; that no man can *become* a true Disciple of *Christ*, who is not affected with a sincere Love of *God and Virtue*; Nor can any one who *already professes* the Name of *Christ*, behave himself

S E R M. self as becomes that Holy Profession, by

III.



Any other Methods or Forms of Religion whatsoever, than by the Practice of Righteousness and true Virtue, in Obedience to the moral Commands of God. When our Saviour had worked the Miracle of the Loaves, recorded in the Beginning of This chapter; many of the Jews believed on him; that is, they professed themselves his Disciples, not out of any regard to the Excellency and Holiness of his Doctrine, but in hopes of being supported by him in the World. To these persons he says, ver. 26, *Ye seek me, not because ye saw the Miracles, but because ye did eat of the Loaves, and were filled: Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for That meat which endureth unto everlasting life.* This Doctrine when they relished not, but began to *murmur*; he reproveth them with somewhat *more earnestness* in the words of the Text; *No man can come to Me, except the Father, which has sent me, draw him:* 'Tis in vain to profess to be my Disciples upon any other foot, than that of Regard to God, and to *the World to come.* Upon which when they murmured still more, ver. 61; he replied

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again,

again, ver. 64, *There are some of you that believe not;-----therefore said I unto you, that no man can come to Me, except it were given unto him of my Father : Given unto him of my Father ;* that is, in the same sense, as he elsewhere tells the *Apostles* that 'twas given to them *to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*, because they were unprejudiced, willing to *hear* and to *understand*; and came to him, not upon any *temporal* Design, but being perswaded (as *St Peter* expresses himself, ver. 68 of this chapter,) that he *had the words of eternal Life*.

UPON account of the necessary and inseparable connection of *these Two* things; of a steady *Regard* to the *eternal* obligations of the *moral law* of God, in every one who professes to embrace the *Revelation* of Christ; upon This account (I say) it is, that our Lord declares, *Joh. vii. 16, 17, My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me ; If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* And again, ch. viii. 42, *If God, says he, were your Father, ye would love Me ; for I proceeded forth and came from God ;*

S E R M.  
III.  
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S E R M. God; *neither came I of myself, but he sent me.* Like to which, is that of the Apostle St John, 1 Joh. ii. 13, *I write unto you little children, because ye have known the Father; ver. 24, If that which ye have heard from the beginning, shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father; 2 Joh. 9, He that abideth in the doctrine, (that is, he that obeys the Laws) of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.* On the contray, to the immoral and hypocritical Pharisees, who hated the doctrine of Virtue and Righteousness; *Ye neither know me, says our Lord, nor my Father, Joh. viii. 19.* And, speaking of the persecutions which the vitious and debauched World would bring upon his disciples; *These things, says he, will they do unto you, because they know not him that sent me, Joh. xv. 21; They have both seen and hated both Me and my Father, ver. 24; And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me, ch. xvi. 3; that is, they have no true Sense, either of natural Religion, or revealed.*

T H E Sum therefore and application of the Whole, is This: The Great End and  
 I Design



Design of the Gospel of Christ, is to re-<sup>S E R M.</sup>  
store Sinners to the Favour of God, by <sup>III.</sup>  
bringing them back to the Practice of   
*True Virtue.* Vicious and corrupt Minds  
therefore, who are enemies to the *Moral*  
*Laws* of God, *must* always naturally be  
averse to the Doctrine of the *Gospel.*  
Consequently such persons are very apt,  
either to oppose and persecute the true  
Disciples of Christ; or else, if in times  
of Prosperity they themselves embrace  
the Profession of Christianity, they always  
place their Religion in outward Forms  
and Ceremonies, or in certain Systems of  
opinion, consistent with unrighteous pra-  
ctice. For to a True Sense of Christ's  
Religion *no man can come, except the Fa-*  
*ther draw him,* that is, except the love  
of God and Virtue be his Motive.



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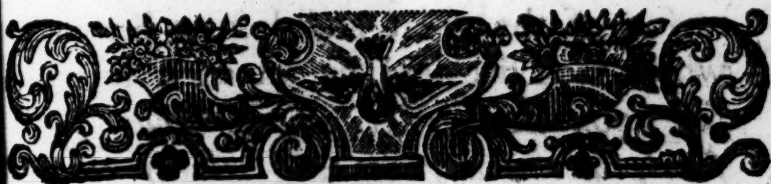
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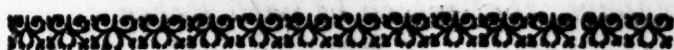
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V



# S E R M O N IV.

The Character of a Good Man.



G E N. xviii. 19.

*For I know Him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment.*



THESE words are part of the S E R M. character, which God him- IV. self, in different places of the Old Testament, has given of that Great and Good

Man, the Patriarch *Abraham*. And they

VOL. III.

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are

SERM. are spoken in this place, as a ground or  
 IV. reason of the great and lasting Blessings  
 which God declared he intended to confer upon him. Ver. 18, *Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the Earth shall be blessed in Him: For I know Him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham, that which he hath spoken of him.* Upon account of This character, and the Blessings consequent upon it, he is elsewhere stiled in Scripture *The Friend of God*, and the *Father of all them that believe*. And in the book of *Ecclesiasticus*, ch. xliv. 19, his history is thus briefly and elegantly summ'd up: *Abraham was a great Father of many people, in glory was there none like unto him: Who kept the Law of the most High, and was in covenant with him; he established the Covenant in his flesh, and, when he was proved, he was found faithful: Therefore he assured him by an Oath, that he would bless the nations in his Seed, and that he would multiply him as the Dust of the Earth, and*  
 exalt



## *The Character of a Good Man.*

85

*exalt his Seed as the Stars, and cause them* SERM.  
IV.  
*to inherit from Sea to Sea, and from the*  
*River unto the utmost part of the Land.*

THE *Virtues*, upon account whereof these great Blessings were promised to *Abraham*, were *personal*: But the *Blessings themselves*, 'tis evident, were, with regard to *Him*, *figurative* only; being fulfilled not till some *hundreds* of years after, upon his *Posterity*; whereas *He* himself did but sojourn in the land of *Promise*, as in a *strange country*, and confessed that he was a *Stranger and Pilgrim* on the *Earth*. From whence the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* very justly infers, That *Abraham* understood the promised Blessing, with regard to *Himself*, to be of a *spiritual* and *better kind*. Ch. xi. 14, 16, 19, *For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country, a better country, that is, an heavenly; For he looked for a City which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.*

THE *particular* *Virtue* which procured to *Abraham* the character given him in my Text, was his *keeping the way of the Lord*, that is, his adhering to the *Belief* and *Worship* of the *One True God* of the

S E R M. *Universe*, in opposition to the general  
 IV. corruption of the idolatrous Nations among  
 whom he lived; and his *commanding his children and his household after him*, to do the like. 'Twas his exemplarily putting in Practice, what *Joshua* publickly declared before all the tribes of *Israel*, that *He* also would do in the like case: Ch. xxiv. 15, *If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the Gods which your Fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the Gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: But as for Me and my House, we will serve the Lord.* In the *New Testament*, This practice is stiled, [*νικᾶν ἐκ τοῦ θηέως*,] Rev. xv. 2, not (as we render the words,) *getting the victory over the Beast*; but, *getting the victory* (or *overcoming*) *from out of the midst of the Beast*; That is, adhering stedfastly to the *True Religion*, in the *midst* of idolatrous and corrupt Nations.

THE Great and Principal Design of every man's life, ought to be the promoting the Glory of God; the encouraging of Virtue, and discouraging every kind of Vice. Not that any man is obliged to be perpetually

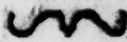
tually employed in actions that are *im-* S E R M. IV.  
*mediately* of a religious nature; or that  
 all his Thoughts and Discourses are to be  
 wholly confined to things *Sacred*: But  
 that his Principal and Final Aim, his Ge-  
 neral and Constant View, the settled  
 Temper and Disposition of his mind, and  
 the Habitual Tendency of all his Actions,  
 be the establishing of Truth and Right in  
 the World. And when once a man has  
 habitually fixt to himself this Great End,  
 and 'tis become (as it were) his Natural  
 Temper; When he is *transformed* (as  
 St Paul expresses it) *by the renewing of*  
*his Mind*, and his *Meat and Drink* (as  
 our Saviour speaks concerning himself) is  
 to *do the Will of his Father which is in*  
*Heaven*: This Love of Goodness, will  
 naturally, like all *Other Habits*, influence  
 even the most *common* actions of his life:  
 Even when he is not actually thinking of  
 it, but employed perhaps in the most  
*vulgar* affairs, or even in *diversions them-*  
*selves*; yet still *every thing* he does, will  
 habitually have somewhat in it, tending  
 to promote a general sense of Truth and  
 Equity, a general Regard to God and  
 Virtue. And *whatever* his *particular*



S E R M. State, Relation, or Circumstances of Life  
 IV. be; he will particularly apply the proper  
 Advantages and Opportunities, wherewith  
 That State or Those Circumstances more  
 peculiarly furnish him, to promote the  
 same Ends of Virtue and Goodness.

As a *Magistrate* or *Governour*, he will  
 take care that That Weight, and Power  
 of *influencing* Others, which the Superi-  
 ority of his Station gives to his *Example*,  
 shall be directed constantly to the Interest  
 of Virtue. In the *execution* of *Laws*,  
 (in which matter there is room for great  
 variety of Prudent or Imprudent exercise  
 of Power,) he will always endeavour to  
 put the *Stress* of Authority, upon urging  
 men to *do* those things which will really  
 make them *better*, and *detering* them from  
 such Practices as are intrinsically in their  
 own nature *evil* or *vicious*; That so the  
 Laws of *God* and *Man* may uniformly  
 promote one and the same End, *for the*  
*Punishment only of Evil doers, and for*  
*the Praise of them that do well*: And with  
 regard to *Ambition*, or the Increase of his  
 own *Power* and *Dominion*; he will take  
 much more pleasure in being able to be  
*publickly beneficial* to Mankind, by main-  
 taining



taining their just Rights and Properties; SERM.  
than in obtaining to *Himself* Power, for IV.  
Powers sake. 

AGAIN: A person of This disposition,  
if he be in his station a *Preacher* of the  
*Gospel*; he will not have in his View the  
*temporal* Grandeur of any particular *Señ*  
or *Party* of Men; but will always endea-  
your to set before men the Truth of God  
in That native *Simplicity*, and represent to  
them the religion of Christ (in the man-  
ner our Lord himself represented it) to  
be such a *reasonable* Service, as that it  
may effectually *convince* the Minds of  
Gainsayers, and, by the irresistible force  
of Truth and Reason, compel them to  
submit themselves to the Obedience of  
Christ. And above all things he will take  
care to give evidence in his whole beha-  
viour, that He *himself* sincerely believes  
and expects That Judgment to come,  
which he sets forth to *Others* as the Great  
Argument that must oblige them to em-  
brace the Truths and to obey the Precepts  
of the Gospel: According to That direc-  
tion of our Saviour, *Let your Light so*  
*shine before men, that they may see your*  
*good works, and glorify your Father which*  
*is*

S E R M. *is in Heaven.* If he lives in a *corrupt* and  
 IV. degenerate *Age*, he will *principally* set  
 himself, with all meekness and gentleness,  
 to oppose the *particular corruptions* of the  
 Age he lives in; endeavouring, by all fair  
 and righteous methods, to bring as Many  
 as possible to the acknowledgment of the  
 Truth.

*Lastly*, SUCH a person, if he be in the  
 capacity of a *Father* or *Master of a Fa-*  
*mily*, will take all proper occasions to in-  
 still right notions of Truth and Virtue,  
 into those over whom the Circumstances  
 of his State and Relation naturally give  
 him an Influence. And by his *Private*  
 Example, showing in his most free and  
 retired conversation, that he has constant-  
 ly upon his mind That *Real* Regard to  
 God and Virtue, which 'tis more easy and  
 usual to make Show of in Publick; he  
 will with great efficacy promote the True  
 Honour of God, and the advancement of  
 sincere Religion. For, *formal Admoni-*  
*tions* and *Publick Declarations* concerning  
 matters of Religion, are apt to be of very  
 small force, either towards fixing in the  
 Mind Right Principles, or forming in the  
 Manners a Habit of *virtuous Practice*; if  
 in

in the *private* life and conversation of S.E.R.M.  
those by whom Families are to be direct- IV.  
ed, there appear Prophaneness and Impi-  
ety, or Lewdness and Debauchery, or  
tyrannical Oppressiveness and violent and  
unreasonable Passions. How affectionate  
soever the Exhortations of the Preachers  
of the Gospel be, and how often soever  
repeated Instructions be given to young  
persons either in Schools or otherwise;  
yet if the Examples they find at home in  
the Practise of common Life, be vitious,  
debauched, and altogether contrary to the  
Precepts and Admonitions given them in  
form; the effect of all such instruction  
cannot but be, comparatively speaking,  
very inconsiderable. Nor is there any  
other *possible* way, by which there can be  
any Hope that the arguments of Religion  
should come to have their due Weight,  
and *general* Efficacy in the World; unless  
They, whose State, Relation, and Cir-  
cumstances, give them a Natural Influ-  
ence over Many, will 'show in the whole  
course of their private conversation, and  
in the freest and most retired part of  
common Life, that they have really upon  
their minds a Sense and Concern for Re-  
ligion;

S E R M.

IV.

ligion; that they have habitually in all their Actions a constant Regard to God, and a sincere Desire to promote the Knowledge of Truth and the Practice of Virtue and Goodness amongst Men. This was the Temper of *Abraham*; Upon account of which, That Great character is given him in the Text, with a *repeated* Assurance of the Blessings designed him: *I know Him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham, That which he hath spoken of him.*

THE words, *He will Command his Children and his household after him*, seem to imply, as if it was in *Abraham's* power to *undertake* for those that were to come after him, *what* they should do; and as if *They* were originally under an *obligation* to *perform* what he should require of them. Which in *general*, 'tis evident, cannot be true: Because then it would follow, that All *Other* Heads of Families had the same Authority likewise; and consequently, the posterity of *every* family, lying under the *same* obligation,



gation, would be under a necessity, where-  
ever any *False* religion prevailed, to con-  
tinue for ever in the profession of such  
false Religion : Directly contrary to *Abra-*  
*ham's own* Practice, who, being born a-  
mong an idolatrous and corrupt people,  
*gat him out from his country, and from his*  
*kindred, and from his Father's house,*  
Gen. xii. 1. Neither, where the *Truth*  
*itself* prevails, is it sufficient that Those  
who come after, follow it barely upon the  
*Command* of those who went before : Be-  
cause, though it be indeed, by Chance,  
the *Truth* only, which they follow ; yet,  
They not knowing it to be so, but follow-  
ing it merely upon such a principle, as  
would equally have made them follow A-  
ny *Errour*, 'tis, with regard to the Mora-  
lity of *Their* Act, the very same thing as  
if they were *not* in the Truth. But in  
*Some* particular Cases, and with regard to  
*some* particular things, such Circumstan-  
ces there *may* be, as may make it very rea-  
sonable for Parents and Governours to  
*Command their children and their house-*  
*holds after them* ; and very reasonable for  
*These*, to be under the strictest Obligation  
to *obey* such Commands. Where things are  
in

S E R M. in their own nature absolutely and *confes-*  
 IV. *sedly* indifferent, there the Command of  
 proper Superiours is manifestly the *Only*  
*Rule of Action.* On the other side;  
 where things are already made necessary  
 by a superiour obligation, as where there  
 is a clear and expresse Command of *God*;  
 or where things are *intrinsically and essen-*  
*tially obligatory* in their own nature, as is  
 the *Study of Truth with Sincerity and Im-*  
*partiality,* and the *Practice of all moral*  
*and eternal Virtues*; there the instruction  
 and direction, and Example and Authori-  
 ty of natural Superiours, is the proper  
 means of laying before *ignorant and*  
*thoughtless* minds, and of inforcing upon  
 them, those original and antecedent Obli-  
 gations. This latter, was the case of *Abra-*  
*ham* in the Text: He was to command  
*his children and his household after him,*  
*that they should keep the way of the Lord,*  
*to do Justice and Judgment*; that they  
 should worship the *True God* in opposition  
 to *Idols*, and that they should practise *Ju-*  
*stice and Righteousness* towards Men. The  
 things were in themselves necessarily, of  
*intrinsic eternal obligation*; and the Com-  
 mand of *Abraham*, was the setting That  
 obligation

obligation before their eyes; teaching them to see it, and have a just sense of it, reminding them to attend to it, and pressing and enforcing it upon their Minds.

S E R M.  
IV.

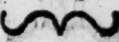
In This case therefore, *Abraham* might well undertake, (and 'tis his great Commendation that he did so,) to command (as far as in him lay) *his children and his household after him*: Because the *things themselves, together with His Command*, clearly carried along with them *their own evidence and conviction*. The *grounds and reasons* of which conviction nevertheless, in the midst of universally corrupt and idolatrous nations, might very possibly and probably, in *His* family, as well as in all those around him, not have been attended to; had they not been seconded by *His* Instruction, Example, and Command. *I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.*

*Another Instance*, wherein there seems to be an Obligation laid upon Posterity, by an *Act* of those who went before them; is the case of *Circumcision*. Gen. xvii. 9. *God said to Abraham, thou shalt keep*

SERM. keep my Covenant, thou and thy seed after  
 IV. thee, in their generations :-----Every man-  
 child among you,-----that is eight days old,  
 shall be circumcised,-----for an everlasting  
 covenant : And the-----man-child who-----  
 is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off  
 from his people; he hath broken my Cove-  
 nant. Circumcision, was a *Token of the*  
*Covenant* between God and That people ;  
 and an *Obligation* upon the circumcised  
 person, to keep the Law : Yet 'tis evident  
 an infant at eight days old, could not give  
 his *Consent*, to take upon himself any  
 such *Obligation*. The *Reason* why the  
*Obligation was valid* upon him *notwith-*  
*standing* was *This*. God was pleased to  
 promise to *Abraham* and his Posterity such  
 and such particular Blessings, as were en-  
 tirely a *free Gift*, and which he was not  
 in justice under any obligation to have  
 promised. These Blessings, he limited  
 to the Conditions of a particular Cove-  
 nant; and the Seal or Token of That Co-  
 venant, was the ceremony of Circumcisi-  
 on. Now if the person who, without  
 his own *consent*, was circumcised the  
 eighth day, would not afterwards per-  
 form the conditions of That Covenant ;  
 there



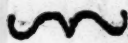
there was no wrong done him, if he received not those Blessings, which by *Free Gift only* were annexed to the performance of the conditions of That particular Covenant. And he might *moreover* very justly be *punished*, for rejecting That Covenant; because *God* has, without controversy, a Right to require from All his Creatures Obedience to such Commands as he thinks fit to impose upon them, whether they themselves give their *Assent* to his Commandments or no.

S E R M.  
IV,  


By *Analogy* drawn from this Rite of *Circumcision*, it has for very many Ages been a general Practice in the Christian Church, to receive Infants by *Baptism* into the Obligations of Faith and Obedience to the Gospel; and to make Profession for them, what they are to believe and obey. Whether this Analogy be *rightly* drawn, or no; and be a *sufficient* and *adequate* foundation, for what has been built upon it; is a controversy which I shall not at present enter into: But from what has been already said upon the *Unquestionable* case of *Circumcision*, and upon *Abraham's Command* in the Text to *his children* and to *his household after him*, and

S E R M. upon the *Nature* of these sorts of Obligations in *general*; the proper *application*

IV.



I shall make, is, to consider briefly *what* *Obligation* lies upon *Those*, who without their own Knowledge or Consent have been *baptized* in their *Infancy*, and have had a *Baptismal Vow* made for them by *Others*; *What* *Obligation* really lies upon *Them* to *embrace* and *obey* the *Gospel*, in the *whole* course of their *Lives*. Now 'tis very evident, *generally* speaking, that no man has a *Right* to make any *Promise* for *Another*, without his own *Consent*; and no man is obliged to *make good* any such *Promise*, if there lies upon him no *other* obligation, but what arises merely from *such* a *Promise*, made without his knowledge or *Consent*. Neither is it sufficient, that the things promised to be done, are *really* for the persons *own Advantage* who is to perform them. For *every* person, when he arrives at years of understanding, has in all such cases, a *Right* to judge for *Himself* *what* is his own *Advantage*; and 'tis not what *Another* thinks, but what he himself is convinced to be for his own *Benefit*, that must finally determine him to choose and act. Wherefore, in deed, All Under-

Undertakings of this kind, such as are S E R M.  
*Baptismal Vows* made on the behalf of IV.  
*Infants*, are not to be esteemed as Promi-  
ses what the person *shall* do, but what he  
shall be *taught*, what he shall be *instruct-*  
*ed*, what he shall be *reminded* and *called*  
*upon* to do, and to take upon himself that  
he *will* do. For the true *Ground* of *obli-*  
*gation* in this case is, that the things them-  
selves to be performed are in their own  
nature such, as every person, when he ar-  
rives at the full Use of his Reason, would  
be indispensably obliged to perform, whe-  
ther Others had beforehand undertaken  
for him any such thing, or no. To *in-*  
*quire carefully* into the Will of God, to  
*believe* what God declares, and to *do* what  
he commands, are obligations absolutely  
incumbent upon every man, though they  
had never been bound upon him by any  
Vow or Promise: And therefore the Vow  
made at Baptism on the behalf of an In-  
fant, is not so truly the Ground of his  
being obliged; as the *necessary obliga-*  
*tion* of the *Things themselves*, is that  
which makes the *Vow itself* to be valid  
upon him. Nor is any Promise made by  
Others, so properly with intention to lay  
V O L. III. H 2 any

S E R M. any *obligation* upon the person, or tie  
 IV. him up to any thing which he would not  
 otherwise have been bound to perform ;  
 But the true Design is only in way of  
 kindness and assistance, to *remind* him of  
 an obligation, *absolute in itself*, that he  
*carefully inquire after*, and *believe* and  
*obey the Will of God*. And This may,  
 very easily, be of Great *Benefit* and *Use-*  
*fulness*. For every man being obliged to  
*study impartially the Will of God*, and to  
 improve himself in the *Knowledge* of  
*Truth* and in the *Practice of Virtue*,  
 and to live up to the best *Light* he can  
 obtain ; 'tis plainly of very great Advan-  
 tage to Men, to be from the Beginning  
 instructed in the *way of Truth*, to have  
*Examples* set before them of *Virtue* and  
*Righteousness*, and to be *reminded* and *call-*  
*ed upon to consider* and *attend to* those Ob-  
 ligations, which *are* incumbent upon  
 Men whether they attend to them or no.  
 The Great and Righteous Judge of the  
 Whole Earth, knows how to have com-  
 passion, upon the *ignorant*, and upon them  
 that are *out of the way* ; and *will* reserve  
*mercy* in store, according to the exigency  
 of *every Man's case*, for those who,



*The Character of a Good Man.*

101

through ill instruction, wander in the S E R M.  
ways of Errour. But 'tis a mighty *Ad-* IV.  
*vantage*, and a particular *Blessing*, to be  
originally led into the way of *Righteous-*  
*ness*. For so in the Text, 'tis not only  
recorded in commendation of *Abraham*,  
that he would *command his children and his*  
*household after him*; but 'tis taken notice  
of also in way of consequent Benefit to  
*Them*, that *They* would accordingly *keep*  
*the way of the Lord, to do Justice and*  
*Judgment*.

I SHALL conclude, with making this  
*One only* further Observation. Since *keep-*  
*ing the way of the Lord*, signifies clearly,  
in *Abraham's* case, believing *the True*  
*God*, as well as doing *Righteousness*; and  
since under the *Gospel* still more empha-  
tically, sincere *Faith* is always insisted up-  
on, as well as *Virtuous Practice*: it may  
very naturally be inquired, if *Believing*  
does not, like our *Actions*, depend upon  
the *Will*; but if Men must *believe* what  
they have good Evidence for, and cannot  
*believe* what they see no reason to be con-  
vinced of; how then can *Believing* be a  
Duty, which a Man should be bound to  
perform? The Answer plainly is: that

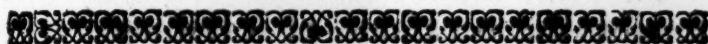
SERM. *That Believing*, which is the Duty of  
 IV. a Christian, is not, in the strict sense  
 of the word, That bare Assent of the  
 Understanding which is not in our  
 Power to with-hold; but it signifies, in  
 the *moral* sense, that good Disposition  
 of the Mind and Will, by which a  
 Man is disposed to attend to, and ex-  
 amine impartially, to consider and re-  
 ceive willingly, what upon due inquiry  
 he shall find to be the Will of God; not  
 carelessly and credulously, but upon so-  
 ber Reason, and proper Evidence. And  
 so likewise on the contrary; *Unbelief*,  
 in Scripture, does not signify disbeliev-  
 ing what wants just and sufficient  
 proof; but it always means, either care-  
 lessly and negligently rejecting without  
 inquiry and without Reason; or else re-  
 jecting wilfully and obstinately, through  
 the Love of Sin and Vice. And this is  
 evidently the case of all profane, loose,  
 and debauched Infidels; who, mere-  
 ly because they hate to be reformed,  
 pretend to disbelieve, what if they seri-  
 ously examined as they ought to do, they  
 would find all possible reason to embrace.

SERMON



# S E R M O N V.

The Nature of Humane Actions.



LUK. xi. 35.

*Take heed therefore, that the Light  
which is in Thee be not Dark-  
ness.*



**U**PON our Lord's having work-  
ed a remarkable Miracle, ver. S E R M. V.  
14; The Pharisees, who were  
resolved not to be convinced  
by *Any* Evidence whatsoever,  
because his Doctrine was a perpetual Re-  
proof of their Hypocrisy and Other Vices;  
alleged, some of them, ver. 15, that *he*  
*cast out Devils through Beelzebub, the*  
H 4 *chief*

S E R M. *chief of the Devils. Others, tempting him,*  
 V. *ver. 16, sought of him a Sign from Heaven:* That is, Pretending to distrust the Miracles which he worked on *Earth*, as if *These* might possibly be the Effect of some *Magical* Power or Artifice; they insisted that he should call for some miraculous Sign directly from Heaven. Our Lord, knowing the Wickedness of their Hearts, ver. 17, and that they did not really desire to be convinced, but only sought for occasions of cavilling; tells the people, ver. 29, *This is an evil generation; They seek a Sign, and there shall no Sign be given it.* And then he describes the *Incurableness* of the Malice and Hypocrisy of these Pharisees; in that their Notions even of *Religion itself*, the very Principle from which alone there is Hope of reformation of Manners; their Notions even about *This very thing*, were themselves the Great Spring and Fountain of Corruption. Their *Religion itself* was *Pride* and *Party*, *Popularity* and *External Show*. And if the Guide of mens Actions be *itself* thus *vitious*, how vitious must their Actions be! Ver. 34, *The Light* (says he) *of the Body, is the Eye:*  
 There-



Therefore when thine eye is single, thy <sup>SERM.</sup> whole Body also is full of Light; But when <sup>V.</sup> thine Eye is Evil, thy Body also is full of

Darkness. His meaning is: What the Eye is to the Body; That very same thing in proportion, the Moral Judgment and Understanding, the Directing Principle, is to a man's Mind. If this Moral Judgment of the Understanding be unbiassed and uncorrupt, and hearkened to with Simplicity and Sincerity; it will either direct and preserve men in the Paths of Truth and Right, or be perpetually calling upon them to return into them. But as, when a man's Eyes are blinded or put out, his whole Body must of necessity move in Darkness: So, if the Moral Judgment of the Mind, the Principle which ought to guide and direct mens Actions, be *itself* perverted by unreasonable Prejudices, and corrupted by vitious Appetites and Passions; there is no hope, but such persons must continue in Error and Wickedness. Take heed therefore, adds our Lord in the words of the Text; *Take Heed, that the Light which is in thee, be not Darkness*: Let every man above all things consider and take care, that  
this

S E R M. this *Moral Judgment* of his Mind and  
 V. Understanding, be not corrupted with  
 blind Unreasonable Prejudices, and with  
 vitious and wilfully indulged Affections.  
 For in That case, his very *Guide* becomes  
 his *Seducer*; and his *Light* itself, is  
*Darkness*.

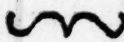
IN the following Discourse upon these words, I shall 1<sup>st</sup> consider briefly the *Nature of Humane Actions*; and what *Dependence* they have upon the *directing Principle*, upon the *Light or Understanding* that is in the Mind of Man. 2<sup>dly</sup>, I shall show *what Power* men have over their own Actions, with regard to the *Influence* of That Light or Understanding, by which they are to be directed. And 3<sup>dly</sup>, I shall consider of what *Consequence* it is in matters of Religion, that men fail not in this first and grand Foundation of all; in the *Root*, the *Spring*, the universal *Guide* and *Director* of their Actions. Take heed, that the *Light* which is in thee, be not *Darkness*.

I. I am to consider the *Nature of Humane Actions*; and what *Dependence* they have upon the *directing Principle*, upon the *Light or Understanding* that is in  
 the

the Mind of Man. The *Motions of Mat-* S E R M.  
*ter* being All *necessary*, 'tis evident that V.  
*Matter* can in no sense possibly be capable  
of any *Action at all*. It can neither begin  
to *move itself* when at *Rest*, nor put any  
*Stop to itself* when in *Motion*, nor in any  
degree alter its own *determination*, or its  
present *State* or *manner of Existence*. But  
whatever *impressions* it receives from the  
*Impulses* of other *Matter*, or from the  
*Influences* of external *Agents*; by *These*,  
and *These only*, it is always necessarily  
and invariably determined. *Sensitive* and  
*Brute Animals* have in themselves a *high-*  
*er Principle*, a *Principle of Self-motion*;  
by which they act and determine them-  
selves, according to the Influence of cer-  
tain *Appetites* and *Passions*. But 'tis al-  
ways according to That Influence and  
Direction *merely*. For over the *Appetites*  
and *Passions themselves*, they have No Go-  
vernment; no *moral Judgment* or *Dis-*  
*cernment* of the Difference of Good and  
Evil; no *superiour Light* or *Direction*,  
by which to *suppress* a hurtful *Appetite*,  
or *over-rule* the *Instincts of Passion*: And  
*therefore* they are not at all accountable  
for any thing they do. This is the pro-  
per

SERM.

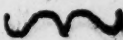
V.



per and peculiar Nature of *Humane* Actions; the distinguishing character by which *Man*, as a *rational* and *moral Agent*, is distinguished from the inferiour Creation. He not only has in himself a *Power of Acting*, which is in common to him with the irrational creatures; but he has moreover a *still higher Principle or Power of directing* his Actions, with some *determinate Views*, and to some certain and constant *End*. He has a *Power of judging beforehand*, concerning the *Consequences* of his Actions, concerning the Reasonableness or Unreasonableness of the End he aims at; and he has a *Power of recollecting, after* the Action done, whether he acted with a good or an evil View. He can either *follow* the irregular Motions of All his *Appetites and Passions*, as do the Beasts that perish; or he can *restrain and overrule* their Sollicitations, by attending to the Guidance of a *Superiour Light of Reason and Religion*. Nay, a man *cannot* indeed *but* have *some* View and Design in every thing he does. Even when he abandons himself *most implicitly* to the *Brutal* Guidance of *mere Appetite and Passion*, still he does it with *some View*;

and



and with a *Consciousness*, which *Beasts* <sup>SERM.</sup>  
have not, that he knowingly and deli- <sup>V.</sup>  
berately *chuses* to aim at some mean and   
unworthy End. Hence arises That *Judg-*  
*ment of Reflexion* which we call *Conscience*;  
by which a man either *approves* or *con-*  
*demns* his own *past* Actions, and appre-  
hends that he shall accordingly be *appro-*  
*ved* or *condemned* by *Him* also to whom  
he must finally *give account* of himself.  
*If* a man, in the general course of his  
Life, accustoms himself to consider these  
things beforehand, that is, if he will be-  
have himself as a rational Creature; *If*  
he accustoms himself in all his Actions  
to consider the Reason and Equity of  
Things, to consider what is reasonable  
for *Himself* to do, or for *Him* to expect  
should be done by *Another*; to consider  
what is agreeable to the Will of God,  
and likely to be approved at the Bar of  
an impartial and All-seeing Judge: *If*  
This (I say) be his main directing Prin-  
ciple, and the Point which he constantly  
keeps in View; his Actions, *generally*  
speaking, will not fail to be Virtuous and  
Good. For such as is the Root or Cause,  
such will be the Effect; Such as is the  
Fountain,

SERM. Fountain, such will be the Streams that  
 V. issue from it. A Good tree, will not  
 usually bring forth Bad fruit. A Good  
 man, out of the good treasure of his  
 heart, will naturally bring forth Good  
 things. For out of the abundance of the  
 Heart the Mouth will speak, and the  
 Hands will be accordingly directed to act.

ON the contrary; *If* a man's Principles be loose and Atheistical; *If* he has no Sense of the Reason and Equity of things, nor Apprehension of the righteous Judgment of God; *If* his *Views* be no other than the satisfying of his Appetites, the gratification of his Passions, the pursuing his present Interests, and pleasing his own unreasonable Self-will; it cannot be, but his Actions will be *generally* immoral and vitious.

FURTHER yet; *If* a man's Principles be *Superstitious*, that is, such as not only *set him at liberty* from the great Ties of Benevolence and Charity, but moreover lay upon him the strongest *direct and positive Obligation* to unrighteous Practices; in This case, his Conduct will necessarily be as much worse, than That of a person who has *no* Principles at all;

## *The Nature of Humane Actions.*

III

as One who follows a *False Light* that S E R M. V. leads directly to Destruction goes more certainly out of the right way, than he who at all adventures walks in *Darkness*. Such a one will act *wickedly*, not only when his *Pleasures*, his *Interest*, or his *Passions* prompt him; which is the farthest a Man of *no principles* will go; But *This Man*, in *opposition* to all his own natural Inclinations and Passions, as well as to the Reason and Truth of things, will, out of *Principle*, and in order to do *God* good Service, run zealously into the vilest barbarities of unrighteousness. This is a consideration very necessary to be distinctly attended to, concerning the *Nature and Spring of Human Actions*; and what *Dependence* they have upon the *directing Principle*, upon the *Light or Understanding* that is in the Mind of Man.

II. I PROPOSED to show *what Power* Men have over their own Actions, with regard to the *Influence* of That Light or Understanding, by which they are to be directed. Every Action a Man does, Every Action of any considerable importance in life, Every Action that is of a Moral or Immoral nature; must of necessity be  
done

SERM. done with *some View* or other, either

V. upon a *Good Principle* or a *Bad* one.

For when we speak of man's having *No Principles* at all, the Meaning is only that they have *No Good Principles*; and that they act entirely upon this *One ill Principle*, of thinking themselves at Liberty from all Obligation to regard the Essential Differences of Good and Evil. Every Action (I say) of a rational Creature, every such action as has any thing of Morality or Immorality in it, must of necessity be done with *Some View* or other, either upon a *Good Principle* or a *Bad* one. Now if Men's *Principles* were necessarily implanted in their *Nature*, and their *Actions* by a like *natural Necessity* followed from their *Principles*; the Consequence then indeed would be, that Men had *no Power* at all over their Own Actions, and consequently could be no way *accountable* for what they do. But the Truth, plainly is This. As the *Eye*, or the *Faculty of Seeing*, is not at all formed by the Power of *Man*; and the *Light*, which is the *Object* of Sight, is likewise what *God* has made it, and has no dependence on *Man's Will* or *Pleasure*; and therefore



therefore Men are not answerable for ha-  
ving *better* or *worse* Organs of Sense, or  
for having *more* or *less* Light, but only for  
the *Use* of *Those* Eyes and of *That* Light  
which they have: So, with regard to the  
*Mind* likewise, both the *internal Capacity*  
of *Understanding*, and the *external Means*  
of *Information*, are what God pleases to  
bestow on every Man, and have no de-  
pendence on the person's *own Will*; And  
therefore no Man is answerable for having  
a *larger* or *smaller Capacity*, or for hav-  
ing *more* or *fewer Means* of *Information*:  
But he is accountable for the *Use* of *That*  
degree of *Understanding*, and for the *Use*  
or *Abuse* of *Those* Means of Knowledge,  
*whatsoever* they be, which God has  
thought fit to afford him. A Man may  
*shut* his Eyes, and may *chuse* Darkness ra-  
ther than Light: Or he may, through  
*Wilfulness* or *Passion*, chuse to follow a  
*False Light* instead of a *True one*, an *ima-*  
*ginary Spectre* instead of a *Reality*: Or  
he may *put out* his Eyes, and bring him-  
self under a sort of necessity of blindly  
following Some *Guide*, who (as it hap-  
pens) may equally lead him in the *Right*  
Way or in a *Wrong one*. A Man may by  
VOL. III. I Negli-

SERM.  
V.  
~

S E R M. Negligence, or by *Wilfulness*, or by *Love*  
 V. *of Vice*, or by *Any customary and habitual*  
 ill Practice, pervert or blind his own *Understanding*. He may, by *rejecting* the *Means* of discovering the *Truth*, through his own *Fault*, and not through *Want* of *Capacity*, form to himself *ill Principles* instead of *Good* ones. Or, if he has never so *good Principles*, yet, as *seeing the Way* is not necessarily *walking in it*, he may suffer himself to be *Tempted* to act *against* his *Principles*, to act *against* the *Reason* of his *own Mind*, as well as *against* the *Reason and Truth* of *Things*. Men therefore *have a Power* over their own *Actions*, notwithstanding *all the Influence* of That *Light or Understanding*, *by which they are to be directed*. Nevertheless; since, *generally speaking*, such as *Men's Principles* are, such will be Their *Actions*; and He whose *Conduct* is directed by settled *ill Principles*, will much more *constantly*, and in much *greater Instances*, and with *Effects* of much *higher Malignity*, do what is *Wrong*; than He who, having *virtuous and good Principles*, yet in particular *Cases* fails of keeping up to them in *Practice*; 'tis hence obvious,

III. IN

III. IN the *Third* place, to observe, of S E R M.  
what *Consequence* it is in matters of Religion, that Men fail not in this first and grand V.  
Foundation; in the *Root*, the *Spring*, the  
universal *Guide* and *Director* of their Actions: *Take heed, that the Light which is*  
*in thee, be not Darkness.* If a Man has  
the *Best* Principles that can be: If he be  
firmly perswaded in his own Mind, of  
the essential Difference of Good and Evil,  
of God's Government of the World, and  
of a Judgement to come: If he has right  
Notions of the true Nature of Religion,  
that it consists in living *soberly, righteously*  
*and godly*, under the Inspection of a  
righteous and all-seeing Judge: Still,  
such is the Deceitfulness of Sin; so many  
are the Temptations and Allurements  
of the World; so blind are the Appetites,  
so strong the Passions of Men; that nothing  
is more common, than to see even  
these *best of Principles* over-ruled, and the  
Force of them defeated, by the Strength  
and Prevalency of different Temptations.  
How much *more*, when Men's *Principles*  
*themselves* are *consistent* with Wickedness,  
must it be expected that *Degeneracy of*  
*Manners* will prevail! and still *more*, if  
VOL. III. I 2 their

S E R M. their Principles be not only *consistent* with

V. Vice, but such as moreover *directly* lead them, and even *lay the Obligations of Conscience* upon them, to *unrighteous Practices*! If the Salt itself has lost its Savour, wherewith shall things be seasoned? And if the Light itself, which is in thee, be Darkness; how great is That Darkness? To instance in Particulars. If a Man's Religion consists chiefly, in a confident Presumption of his own unconditionate *Predestination*; will not This naturally lead him to be *stiff* and *censorious*, and to have too little Care of his *Moral and Equitable* Behaviour towards all Men? If a man can persuade himself that a strong *Credulity*, or an imaginary *Belief* of *unintelligible Notions*, can be truly acceptable in the Sight of God; has not This an obvious and evident Tendency, to make him pride himself in the pretended *Rightness* of his *Faith*; and despise the real Virtues, of *Impartiality*, *Equity*, and *Love of Truth*? If Another can prevail with himself to believe, that after a *vitious and immoral Life*, he may at last upon a Bed of Sickness, by the *Absolution of the Priest*, or by the *Sacraments*



## *The Nature of Humane Actions.*

117

ments of the Church, or by a confident Reliance upon the Merits of Christ, elude the Threatnings of the Almighty, and artfully escape the Wrath of the Just and Righteous Judge of the Whole Earth; does not This plainly give him encouragement to defer his Repentance, to think Virtue and Goodness really needless, and to *continue in Sin, that Grace may abound*? Again: If a Man can fancy that the most important and fundamental point of Religion, is the adhering fiercely to some one particular *Sect, Party, or Denomination* of Men; and the contending violently *for or against* certain peculiar *Forms or Ceremonies* of Worship; has not This an evident Tendency to make him believe, that, by a great Zeal for these external Forms, he may commute or compensate for the Want of those Moral Virtues, which Alone are of *Real and Essential Goodness*? But if, beyond All This, a Man's very *Mind and Conscience* be so far defiled, as that he can imagine Religion to lay a direct *Obligation* upon him to commit some of the greatest of Wickednesses, to make use of the vilest *Frauds* and the most open *Violences*, to

SERM.  
V.  
~

SERM. *break Faith* against the most Solemn Engagements, and even with the greatest Cruelty to destroy Men's Lives in order to do God good Service; as Those of the Church of Rome have frequently done: Whenever This (I say) is the Case, so that Men can satisfy their very worst Passions, of Ambition, Pride, Cruelty and Tyranny, not only without the Reproach, but even with the highest Applause, of their own Consciences; What Hope, what Possibility is there, for Virtue and Goodness here to take Any place? Take heed, that the Light which is in thee, be not Darkness.

THE Light, which God originally implanted in Men, is Reason, or their Natural Sense and Discernment of the Difference of Good and Evil. The Light of Revelation, is a Confirmation and Improvement of the Natural Light of Reason. And they are Both of them extinguished, by the Darkness of Irreligion, and (which is still of worse consequence) by the False Lights of Superstition.

THE Inferences from what has been said, are briefly as follows.

1<sup>st</sup>. FROM

## *The Nature of Humane Actions.*

119

1<sup>st</sup>. FROM this exhortation of our Sa-  
viour given to all Christians, *Take heed*  
*that the Light which is in thee, be not dark-*  
*ness*; 'tis evident that persons even of the  
*meanest* capacities, *may* and *must* have a  
*clear Understanding* of their Christian  
*Duty*, so far as 'tis at any time to *Them*  
a *Duty*. To live *soberly, righteously* and  
*godly*, with a constant Sense of God upon  
their Minds, and under a perpetual Ex-  
pectation of the Future Judgment; is  
what the *Lowest* Capacities may *see clear-*  
*ly* and *distinctly* to be their Duty. This  
is *Fundamental* in Religion. Things of  
*greater Difficulty*, they cannot be obliged  
to understand or regard, any further than  
they meet with *particular Light* to direct  
them. If at any time they run on *impli-*  
*citly*, and stop not at the things they *cer-*  
*tainly know*; they run an *apparent hazard*  
either of walking in *Darkness*, or (which  
is still *more dangerous*) of following a  
*False and Deceitful Light*.

2. WHOEVER at any time speaks a-  
gainst *Reason*, in matters of Religion; *knows*  
*not*, or considers not, *whereof he affirms*. All  
*Reason* and *Truth* is from God; And God  
does *as truly reveal* himself by the *Nature*

S E R M. *and Reason of Things, as by Inspiration of*  
 V. *Words. Reason, is the Light of God's*  
 ~~~~~ *Creation: And though Men, if they be*  
not very careful and very sincere, may
mistake their own Fancies and Imagina-
tions for Reason; yet the Nature and
Truth of Things, is still really what it is;
and Light is always discernible, if Men
would honestly attend to it. The Expe-
rience of all Ages and of all Nations hath
shown, that No Errors have been of such
wide Extent, and of such lasting Conti-
nuance, and so destructive of all Moral
Virtue and Goodness; as those which Men
have been led into, by departing from
the most evident and rational Fundamen-
tals of Religion, to follow the blind and
false Lights of Superstition.

3. F R O M what has been said; 'tis evi-
 dent it never was our Lord's intention,
 that there should be among Men (what
 the Church of *Rome* pretends to be) an
Infallible Guide. Had any such thing
 been appointed of God, our Saviour's
 Caution in the Text, and in numberless
 other places of his Gospel, had been
 needless and absurd. *Teachers* of Reli-
 gion, are, in the nature of the thing, ne-
 cessary;

The Nature of Humane Actions.

121

cessary ; and, in fact, expressly appointed S E R M,
of Christ. But all *Teaching*, supposes V.
that persons are *capable of being taught* ;
and that, *when they Are taught*, they *can*
Then see and know the thing to be *right*.
In the way to eternal life, a man may ve-
ry well be supposed to *want* the direction
of a *Guide* : Yet in the whole Course of
That Way, he may by Many *very certain*
Marks and Tokens, laid down *beforehand*
in *Reason and Scripture*, distinguish clear-
ly whether his *Guide* directs him *right* or
no : And if his *Guide* leads him to a *Pre-*
cipice, he may easily enough discern it.
Take heed, that the Light which is in thee,
be not Darkness.

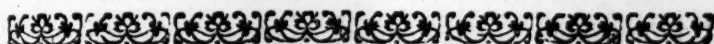


S E R M O N



S E R M O N VI.

How to judge of Moral Actions.



L U K. vi. 44.

*For every Tree is known by his own
Fruit : For of Thorns men do
not gather Figs, nor of a Bram-
ble-bush gather they Grapes.*



HERE are *some Figures of* S E R M.
Speech founded upon Simi- VI.
litudes so obvious, so natu-
ral, so expressive, that whilst
they convey into the minds
even of Those who have the meanest
capacities, a Notion or Doctrine altoge-
ther

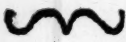
S E R M. ther as *distinct* and as *easy* to be understood, as any *Literal* expression whatsoever; they at the same time *illustrate* it moreover with the *clearest Light*, and *confirm* the *Truth* of it with the *strongest Reason* or *Argument*. Of This kind, there is great Variety of Instances of Scripture.

T H U S when St Paul exhorts Christians to present their Bodies a *Living Sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God; and elsewhere tells them, that they themselves are the *Temple* of God; and threatens, that if any man defile the *Temple* of God, Him shall God destroy: Under the *strong image* of the Unfitness and Abominableness, the Detestableness and Profaneness, of any Uncleanneſs or Impurity appearing in the *Temple of God*; the odiousness of all *moral* impurity, of all *debauched Practices* whatsoever in Any person who professes himself a Worshipper of God, is set forth after a *more lively and affecting manner*, than it could be by any *literal* description whatsoever: And, under the *obvious and sensible idea*, that a *Sacrifice* offered to God, even of a *Beast slain*, could not, with any just sense of the Greatness of the
Divine

Divine Majesty, but be *without Blemish*; S E R M. VI.
is represented the Acceptableness of a *Living Rational Person*, dedicating himself to the Service of God by a *sober and virtuous course of life*, in opposition to every kind of Debauchery, *more strongly and pathetically*, than it could any way have been done in *plain and direct Terms*, *without such a figurative expression*.

IN like manner, in the words of the *Text*, the necessary Connexion between the nature of mens *Actions*, and the *Principles* from which they flow; and the Absurdity of supposing, that *good Actions* can ever flow from *ill Principles*, or *ill Actions* from *good Principles*; is expressed with greater Clearness and Strength, under the *similitude* of the regular Productions of nature, than it could have been by the most *literal and direct* Assertion. *Every Tree is known by its own Fruit: For of Thorns men do not gather Figs, nor of a Bramble-bush gather they Grapes.*

OUR Saviour, in his Parable of the Sower, St Matt. xiii. under the similitude of *different sorts of ground*, wherein good Seed being sown, brought forth *fruit* according to the nature of the Soil, in some places

S E R M. places plentifully, in others thinly, in
 VI. others none at all; gives a very *empha-*
 *tical* and *accurate* description of the dif-
 ferent Effects, which the Doctrines of
 True Religion, or the Teaching and Ex-
 hortations of Virtue, have upon the Lives
 and Actions of different Sorts of men.
 As the *same Seed*, sown in a *good Soil* or
 a *bad*, brings forth *much Fruit* or *little*,
 or *perishes entirely* and never grows at all;
 so the Knowledge of Truth, and the In-
 structions of Righteousness, *according to*
the different dispositions of the minds of
 Those, to whom the Arguments of Rea-
 son and the Motives of Religion are
 proposed; are either entirely suppressed
 by them, and extinguished, or else, some-
 times in a greater, sometimes in a less
 degree, they produce the Fruit of *Virtu-*
ous Acts and Habits, in the course of a
 righteous and religious Life. And from
 hence, throughout the whole Scripture,
 by a figure of Speech grounded upon *the*
analogy of This Parable, the Acts and
 Habits of every Moral Virtue, founded
 upon the Motives of the Gospel, and
 springing from the Principles of True
 Religion, from the Belief of God and of a
 Judgment

How to judge of Moral Actions.

127

Judgment to come; are very expressively S E R M.
termed, *the Fruits of the Spirit*; the na- VI.
tural *Produce* of a Mind rightly instruct-
ed in the Doctrines of *Truth*, and di-
rected and influenced in all its Actings,
by a just Sense of what is *Right in itself*
and *Acceptable to God*. Gal. v. 22, *The*
Fruit of the Spirit, is Love, Joy, Peace,
Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith,
Meekness, Temperance. And They who
by a virtuous course of Life in their
whole conversation, and in every part of
their Behaviour in the World, show that
their Religion is not an *empty Notion* or
external *Form of Godliness*, a mere *Deno-*
mination of a Sect or Party; but a real
Principle and Ground of Action, a real
Rule and Guide of life and manners; are
by the Apostle described under *This* cha-
racter, that they *bring forth Fruit unto*
God; having *their Fruit unto Holiness,*
and the End everlasting Life, Rom. vi. 22;
vii. 4. The *Figure*, is the *very same* with
That made use of in the Text: Every
Tree is known by his own Fruit; for of
Thorns men do not gather Figs, nor of a
Bramble-bush gather they Grapes. And
the *literal sense* of it is explained by our
Saviour

SERM. Saviour himself in the very next words
 VI. following, ver. 45; *A good man, out of the good Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: For of the abundance of the Heart, his Mouth speaketh.* Now according to *This* explication, 'tis evident that, whether by this figurative phrase, *every Tree*, we understand the *Person himself* who acts, or the *Principles* from which his *Actions* flow; the *Sense* is, either way, *one and the same*. By the *Actions* of a man's *Life*, by the whole *Course and Tenour* of his *Behaviour* in the *World*, and by *no other distinction* whatsoever, can be ascertained the *True Character* of any *Person*, and the *Real Goodness or Badness* of his *Principles*. *External Names and Denominations*, either of *Things or Persons*, are all *deceitful*. *Pretences to Opinions and Doctrines*, may be all *fallacious*. *Forms and Observances* of all kinds may be *hypocritical*. Any thing may be called by *Any Name*, and Any thing may appear under *Any Shape*. But never can it happen in *Any case*, that of *Thorns* men should gather
 ther

ther Figs, or that of a Bramble-bush they should gather Grapes. Never can it happen in Any case, that men of corrupt Principles and vitious Lives, can really have any True Religion; or that Any True Religion, any Doctrine that is from God, should be the Parent of any Vice or of any Folly, of any Absurdity, of any Cruelty, of any Pride, Tyranny, or Contentiousness, or of any thing mischievous among men. The Acknowledgment and the rational Worship of God who ruleth over All; The Universal Love and Goodwill of All men towards All, in which our Lord declares all the Law and the Prophets, and all the Gospel too, to be summarily contained; The Sobriety, Holiness, and Virtuous Living, which the Religion of Christ requires in Those, who expect a Judgment to come, and who (according to his Promise) look for new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness: These things can no more possibly be the real productive Cause of any thing hurtful to Mankind, than a Vine can bring forth any other Fruit than Grapes, or a Fig-tree than Figs; or than Sheep (according to another of our Lord's

S E R M.

VI.

S E R M. similitudes) can justly be charged with
 VI. the Rapine committed by *Wolves in
 ~~~~~ Sheeps-clothing*. There is no Principle in  
 Nature of more certain and necessary  
 Truth, of more evident Clearness, of more  
 universal Extent and Usefulness than This.  
 And for This reason our Saviour, upon so  
 many occasions, and in numerous Places of  
 the Gospel, repeats this Maxim, and  
 makes perpetual Allusions to it. Thus  
*Matt. vii. 15, Beware of false Prophets,*  
*which come to you in Sheeps-clothing, but*  
*inwardly they are ravening Wolves: Ye*  
*shall know them by their Fruits: Do men*  
*gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles?*  
*A good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit,*  
*neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth*  
*good Fruit: Every Tree that bringeth*  
*not forth good Fruit, is hewn down and*  
*cast into the Fire: Or, as he elsewhere*  
*expresses himself concerning the hypocri-*  
*tical Pharisees; Matt. xv. 13, Every Plant,*  
*which my heavenly Father hath not planted,*  
*shall be rooted up. Again, Matt. xii. 33, 34,*  
 Concerning the same hypocrites, when,  
 under a pretense of Zeal for Religion,  
 they blasphemed both the *Doctrine* and  
 the *Works* of the Holy Ghost; O Gene-  
 ration

## *How to judge of Moral Actions.*

131

ration of Vipers, says he, how can ye, being Evil, speak Good things? Either make the Tree good, and his Fruit good; or else make the Tree corrupt, and his Fruit corrupt; For the Tree is known by his Fruit: That is; Either forbear these wicked and unrighteous Practices, or pretend not to make Profession of Religion at all. To mention but One place more: *Job. xv. 1, I am the true Vine, saith our Lord, and my Father is the Husbandman. Every Branch in me that beareth not Fruit, he taketh away; and every Branch that beareth Fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more Fruit.* The Meaning is: The Belief of the Doctrine of Christ, and of a Judgment to come, is the Foundation, the Root or Principle of all Christian Virtues: Every man therefore who calls himself a Christian, and yet lives not in the Practice of Christian Virtue; is rejected of God, as a Dead Branch; as having no participation in That Vital Principle which alone unites him to Christ here, and entitles him to a Share in his Kingdom hereafter.

SERM.

VI.

THE Meaning of the figurative Expressions in the Text, being thus explained from the *Nature and Reason of the Thing*, and from the *Use of the like manner of Speaking in other places of Scripture*; the *Doctrine* contained in the words, appears plainly to be This: That by the *Actions* of a man's Life, by his *virtuous or vicious Practice*, by the whole *Course and Tenour* of his Behaviour in the World, and by *no other Mark or Distinction* whatsoever, can with any certainty be determined the *True Character of Any Person*, and the *Real Goodness or Badness* of the *Principles* by which he is governed. *Every Tree is known by his Own Fruit: For of Thorns men do not gather Figs, nor of a Bramble-bush gather they Grapes.*

AND the *Use* of this *Doctrine* is of the *greatest Importance and Extent*: For, from hence may be estimated the *Excellency and Weightiness* of Any particular *Truth*, and the *Measure or Degree* of *Malignity* of every Sort of *Errour*, in matters of Religion. From hence may be judged the *Nature and Quality* of every kind of *Materials, built* (according to the Apostle St Paul's similitude, 1 Cor.



*How to judge of Moral Actions.*

133

iii. 12.) *upon the Foundation of Christ*; SERM. VI.  
whether it be *Gold, Silver, Precious-stones,*  
*Wood, Hay, or Stubble.* Whether it be  
*Work* of such a sort, as, when it comes  
to be *tried* by the *Fire* of the Divine  
Judgment, it will *abide*, and the Builder  
shall *receive a Reward* for it. Or whe-  
ther it *shall be burnt*, and *He accordingly*  
*shall suffer loss*; and yet *he himself finally*  
*be saved*, but *so as by Fire*. Or whether,  
lastly, it be such as is *destructive* of the  
very *Foundation itself*, on which it is  
built; and Then That severe Threatning  
in the following words be applicable to  
him, ver. 17, *If any man destroy the Tem-*  
*ple of God, Him shall God destroy.*

THE *End and Design* of all Religion;  
the Proper *Effect* and *Produce* of Good  
*Principles*; the Good *Fruit* of a Good  
*Tree*; the *ultimate View* and *Fundamental*  
*Intention* of all religious *Truths*, implant-  
ed in men either by Nature or Teaching;  
is the Practice of *Virtue*. For the word  
*Religion*, in its very *Notion* and *original*  
*Meaning*, signifies an *Obligation*; an *Ob-*  
*ligation* upon men, arising from the *Rea-*  
*son of Things* and from the *Government of*  
*God*, to do what is *just* and *virtuous* and  
K 3 good;

SERM. *good*; to live, in a constant habitual Sense  
 VI. and Acknowledgment of *God*, in the  
 ~~~~~ practise of universal Justice and Charity  
 towards *Men*, and in a regular and sober
 Government of *their Own Passions*; under
 a firm persuasion and continual expectation
 of the righteous distribution of Rewards and
 Punishments at their proper Season, in the
 eternal Judgment of *God*. *This*, is the
Foundation of Religion; the *Fundamental*
Doctrine; in all *Places*, and at all *Times*,
 invariable and eternal. *This*, being corrupted
 by numerous *Superstitions* among the
Jews, and by the absurdest *Idolatries* and
 most enormous *Immoralities* among the
Heathen, *Christ* came into the World to
 restore; and, by the preaching of *Forgiveness*
 upon *True Repentance* and *effectual Amendment*
 of *Life and Manners*, to bring back Sinners
 to the Kingdom of *God*, through the
 Obedience of the Gospel. *In proportion*
 therefore as *any Doctrine of Truth* has a
 greater or more proper and more immediate
 Tendency to *promote This Great End*,
 to *produce This Fruit of the Spirit*; exactly
 the very same proportion has it of *Weight*
 and *Excellency*, in the religious
 estima-

How to judge of Moral Actions.

135

estimation of things: 'Tis Gold, or Silver, or Pretious Stones, (in the Apostle's Language,) built upon the Foundation of Christ. And, on the other side, any Erroneous Opinion; in proportion as it has Any, or No Moral Influence; in the very same proportion, 'tis either Faulty or Innocent. 'Tis (in St Paul's similitude) either Wood, Hay, Stubble; something that is merely lost labour, useles only, and insignificant, and of no Strength in the Building: Or else 'tis opposite to, and destructive of, the very Foundation of the Temple of God. 'Tis (in the analogy of our Saviour's Parable,) That which denominates a Man either to be a Vine, in which are many Fruitless Branches; or that he is (according to the Comparison in the Text) a Thorn or a Bramble-bush, from which 'tis impossible to expect there should ever at all be gathered Figs or Grapes.

By This Rule therefore (I say) may certainly be distinguished the Measure or Degree of Malignity of every Sort of Error, in matters of Religion.

K 4

By

SERM.

VI.

it appears *Wherein* consisted the *malignity* of the *Heathen-Idolatry*, and *how Great* the *Evil* of it was. For whereas the rational *Worship* of the *One True God* of *Nature*, and *Governour* of the *Universe*, and the *Acknowledgment* of his *True Perfections* and *Attributes*, taught by the original uncorrupted *Light* of *Nature* and *Reason*, leads *Men* by a *direct* and *proper*, by an *immediate*, *natural*, and *perpetual Influence*, to the *Imitation* and *Practise* of those moral and eternal *Virtues*, which, in their highest and complete *Perfection*, are the *Excellencies* of the *Divine Nature* itself; the *Worship* of *Wood and Stone*, on the contrary, by a no less natural and immediate *Tendency*, leads *Men* to place *empty superstitious* and *senseless Observances* in the *Room* of all real *Virtue* and *Goodness*. And the *Worship* of *Fictitious Deities*, formed, by the *Imaginations* of *Corrupt Men*, like to *Themselves* in the *Practise* of all *unrighteousness* and *Debauchery*; This, still much more, leads *Men* into the most *abominable Corruption* of *Manners*. According to the description *St Paul* gives of the *Heathens*.

then-World, *Rom. i. 21. Because that* S E R M.
when they knew God, they glorified him not VI.
as God,-----and did not like to retain God
in their Knowledge; therefore God gave
them over to a reprobate mind, to do
those things which are not convenient.

Again: *By the same measure of judging, may easily be understood the Nature of That Errour, and the Degree of its ill Effect, which the Nation of the Jews had very generally fallen into, in and before our Saviour's time; viz. their laying the great Stress of Religion, more upon the exact Observance of certain Outward Ceremonies, than upon the habitual Practice of Moral Virtue. The Ceremonies of the Jewish Law, besides their perpetual typifying of the Messiah to come, and their distinguishing in a most remarkable manner the National Worshippers of the God of Heaven from all the idolatrous Nations of the Earth; were moreover appointed of God to be continual Emblems, and as it were Memorials of their Obligation to Moral Holiness. Sanctify yourselves, saith the Lord, Levit. xi. 44; and ye shall be Holy, for I am Holy: And if ye will obey*
my

S E R M. *my voice indeed, and keep my covenant,---*
 VI. *ye shall be unto me a Kingdom of Priests,*
 Ex. xix. 5. *and a Holy Nation. So far therefore as*
 their Observance of the Ceremonies of the Law, promoted the *End* for which those Ordinances were appointed; *So far as* they kept that people *steddy* in their *Adherence* to the *Worship* of the *True God*, and, by the Care required in avoiding every *natural* Impurity, continually reminded them to be much more fearful of whatever was *morally* such: *So far* those Ceremonies were of *real Esteem* in the Sight of God, and of *real* religious *Advantage* to Men. Whensoever the Observance of the same *outward Ceremonies*, was separate from the *internal Moral Benefit*; the Ceremony then became *useless*, and the *Observation* of it *vain*. But when at any time the Ceremony came *in competition* with the *Moral Duty*, or was *preferred* before it, or was presumed to be *acceptable* in the *Stead* of it; in the *Stead* of the *weightier matters of the Law, Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness*; Then the Ceremony, though of God's *own* appointment, became (as the *Prophets* in the *Old Testament*, and our *Saviour* in the *Gospel*, perpetually

How to judge of Moral Actions.

139

petually declare; it became) *odious* to SERM.
God, and *abominable* in his Sight. VI.

Lastly: By the *same* Rule may be judged the *degree* of *Malignity* of any *erroneous* *Notions* or *Opinions* among Christians. The *End* and *Design* of the *Gospel* of *Christ*, is to *restore* *Sinners* to the *Favour* of *God*, by bringing them back to the *Practice* of *Righteousness* and *True Holiness*. So far as *Any* *Errour* whatsoever, hurts not and prevents not *This* *Design*; so far as 'tis merely *speculative*, and produces no *Fruit* of evil *Consequences* in *Practice*; so far 'tis *innocent*, and may be ascribed to *Weakness*. But in what *degree* soever its *Influence* is hurtful to *Virtue*, in the very *same* proportion 'tis always *Faulty* in *Men*, and *blame-worthy* before *God*.

For instance: With regard to erroneous *Notions* concerning *God*: Every *Opinion* concerning the *Divine* *Nature* or *Perfections*, which is in itself *absurd* and *unintelligible*, is just *so far* hurtful to *Religion*, as it *diverts* *Men* from the *Practice* of the *Law* of *Righteousness*, by filling them with a *childish* and *superstitious* *imagination*, that *God* is *pleased* with their
pretending

S E R M. *pretending or fancying that they believe*
 VI. *they know not what.* Notions concerning
 absolute and unconditionate Predestination,
 are just so far faulty and blame-worthy in
 Religion, as they cut the *Sinews* and *demo-*
lish all the *Motives* of *Virtue*, by ascri-
 bing to God *such a Sovereignty*, as *destroys*
 all the *Other Perfections* of his Nature; a
Sovereignty, denoting a *Power* of acting,
 in *Moral Matters*, without regard to *Mo-*
ral Reason; Which, in *Truth* and *Real-*
ity, is no more an *Attribute of God*, than
 the *Power* of acting in *natural things*,
 contrary to *Natural Possibility*. Errone-
 ous Notions concerning *Faith*, (taking it
 to signify a mere *credulity*; whereas in
 truth, when spoken of as a *Christian vir-*
tue, it always means *Fidelity*, or *Acting*
Faithfully and *steddily upon Christian*
Principles;) Errours concerning *Grace*,
 (taking it to signify an *Operation of God*
 upon *Men*, when indeed it denotes His
gracious Acceptance of their *Repentance*
 and *Amendment*, brought about by the
Motives and *Assistances* of the *Gospel*;) Errours concerning the *Merits of Christ*,
 (when *vitious* and *debauched* persons hope
 to be saved by *His Merits*, instead of re-
 forming

forming and amending their Manners in SERM.
order to obtain Forgiveness through His VI.
Intercession :) And, still more than all
these, Applications made to *Angels*, and
to *Saints departed*, and to *Images* of
Wood and Stone, and *Other* the like *In-*
ventions; All These things, are, upon
One and the same Account, *destructive* of
true Religion; in that they suppose Obe-
dience to the eternal and unchangeable
Law of God, which is the Practice of
Moral Virtue, may be commuted for by
any other Performances whatsoever :
Which is indeed the *Essence* of all *Super-*
stition : 'Tis, in the Allusion made by
our Saviour in the Text, the Fruit of
the *Thorn* or *Bramble-Bush*, instead of
Grapes.

AGAIN; With regard likewise to er-
roneous Notions concerning our Duty to-
wards *Men* : Every Opinion that leads in
Practice to *Contentiousness*, *Pride*, *Cruelty*,
and the like; is evidently so far *not inno-*
cent, but *destructive* of Religion, as 'tis
inconsistent with the Great and Eternal
Law of *Charity* and *Good-will* towards
Mankind. From whence may easily be
perceived the extreme *Malignity* of the
Romish

SERM. *Romish Doctrine of Persecution*; by which
 VI. all the *Authority*, wherewith God has invested men for the *Incouragement of Virtue* and *Punishment of Vice*, has been wickedly and perversely imployed in forcing a violent and hypocritical Pretense of *Unity of Opinion*, in matters generally of doubtful *Speculation*, and oft-times of *Ungodly Practise* too; to the entire *Subversion* both of *Truth* and *Charity*.

Lastly; WITH regard to erroneous Notions concerning every man's own private Duty in the Government of *Himself*: Every Opinion that gives Licence to Any Sort of *Debauchery*; that gives men Incouragement to *sin*, in hopes that *Grace may abound*; turning the *Grace of God into Lasciviousness*, as the Apostle expresses it, and making *Christ the Minister of Sin*; Every such opinion, I say, is a *Root of Bitterness*, and brings forth *Fruit unto Death*. Of This Sort is That desperate Notion which has prevailed so much in the Church of *Rome*; a relying upon repeated *Confessions* and *Absolutions* for the *Pardon of Sins*, in the *Practise* of which they still however continue. And of the same Kind is That dangerous expectation

pectation even among *Protestants* too; SERM.
when Men of *loose and debauched Lives* VI.
flatter themselves, that, without Any real Virtue or Holiness, they shall be accepted of God, upon their performing, on a Bed of Sickness and at the Approach of *Death*, some of those external Duties, which were instituted on purpose to be *Obligations* and *Assistances* to *Holiness* of *Life*. But our Rule is One, and Plain: *He that doth Righteousness, is Righteous.* Which is the *literal* Meaning of the *Figure* in the Text: *Every Tree is known by his own Fruit: For of Thorns men do not gather Figs, nor of a Bramble-bush gather they Grapes.*



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V



SERMON VII.

The Nature of Religious Truths.



2 TIM. ii. 25.

In Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth.



S *Light* is necessarily and essentially different from *Darkness*, notwithstanding those who are blind cannot distinguish That difference; so,

SERM. VII.

notwithstanding the Weakness and Blind-

VOL. III.

L

ness

SERM.
VII.

ness of mens Understandings, and the much worse Confusion arising from the Corruption and Perverseness of their Wills; yet *Truth* is still, in the Nature of Things, always Real and Invariable, and, for the most part, *distinguishable* also from *Error*. In *some kinds* of things, 'tis indeed very *difficult* for *Us* to discover where the Truth lies; the *Causes* of things, being abstruse; the *Ends and Designs* of them, remote; the *things themselves*, often intricate; the *Manner* how they may possibly be, diverse and various; and our *Understanding*, in itself finite and fallible. But This difficulty of finding out the Truth, is generally in things of That nature only; which are of no great importance for us to know. As the *Eyes* of our *Body*, are fitted only to discern things within the reach of such a distance, as 'tis of Use to us in Life to comprehend within our View; so our *Understanding*, which is the *Eye* of the *Mind*, can very difficultly search into the Truth of numberless things, which it does not concern us distinctly to know. But in All things of importance, in all things of great and

real

The Nature of Religious Truths. 147

real Use to us, such as are the eternal S E R M.
Differences of Good and Evil, and all VII.
Matters fundamental in *Religion*; in *These* 
things, Truth is always as distinguishable
to the unprejudiced Understanding of a
Person even of a *mean* Capacity, as Light
is by the Eye distinguishable from Dark-
ness.

THAT *God*, the Maker and Judge of
all, is to be worshipped, rather than the
Fictions of Humane Folly. That the
Worship most acceptable to him, is the
Obedience of a virtuous and sober Life,
rather than an Endless Circle of mere
external Ceremonies. That the Practice
of *Justice*, *Righteousness*, *Meekness* and
Charity, is much more useful to men,
than their stirring up each others Zeal
for or against opinions, of which they
understand very little: These great Lines
of Truth, are so plainly, so brightly
conspicuous, both in Reason and Scrip-
ture, that *he who runs may read them*.
Whosoever is led into any Error, con-
trary to these *Great and Fundamental*
Truths, 'tis not by his *Understanding*, but
by his *Will* that he is deceived; and

S E R M. therefore he is justly answerable for his
 VII. Folly. God would have all men to be
 saved, and to come to the Knowledge of the
 Truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4. The Light held forth
 to them is clear and strong; the Rules
 are Few and conspicuous; that an unpre-
 judiced Person would hardly think it pos-
 sible they should be mistaken. Yet so
 extensive is *That kind of Error* which
 proceeds from Wilfulness and corrupt
 Affections, that in opposition to these
 Great and Plain Rules it is, that the *whole*
World lieth in Wickedness, 1 Joh. v. 19.
 In opposition to the Evidence of This
 shining Light it is, that the Devotion of
 the *Popish* World is transferred from the
 God and Father of all things, and from
 the One only Mediator whom *He* has ap-
 pointed; to Saints, and Angels, and Ima-
 ges, and fictitious Relicks. In opposition
 to the same plain and evident Truths it
 is, that, not in the *Popish* World only,
 but in too great a part even of That al-
 so which calls itself *Protestant*, mere out-
 ward and customary Forms have by Ma-
 ny persons a greater Stress laid upon them,
 than the weightier matters of the Law,
 Practise

Practise of True Virtue: And men generally are more concerned to support uncertain Opinions, than to promote the Habits of Justice, Goodness, Temperance, Meekness, and universal Good-will towards Mankind; upon which principally depends our Happiness in *This World*, and our Title to *That which is to come*. This is the Great Corruption, the Great and Universal Error of All Ages in matters of Religion. And they who Thus oppose themselves to the Great End and Design of the Gospel, subverting the Simplicity and Purity of the doctrine of Christ; these, as well as the Atheistical, debauched, and profane, are the Persons whom we ought to be continually instructing in Meekness, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth.

S E R M.
VII.

IN which words of the Apostle, we may observe distinctly the following particulars. 1st, A supposition laid down; That *Truth* is something *real* in itself, and of importance to *Men*; something that may be found, and which we ought to seek after. 2^{dly}, An Observation made

L 3

concerning

S E R M. concerning the corrupt state and disposition of Mankind; that Some there will always be, who *will* set themselves to oppose the Truth. 3dly, A Direction given, concerning our *Own* Duty; that we ought to *instruct* such persons, in *Meekness*. And 4thly, a *Reason* added, *why* we ought to do it in That manner; *if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth.*

1st. HERE is a *Supposition* laid down; that *Truth*, is something *real* in *itself*, and of *importance* to *Men*; something that *may* be found, and which we *ought* to seek after. I have already observed, that where-ever the Scripture speaks of *Truth*, it always means *such* Truth as has relation to *Religion*; And I shall use the word in *That* sense, thro' the whole following Discourse. *All* Truth, of what kind *soever* it be, is *real*; but *not* always of *importance*. *All* Truth, has its *Foundation* in *Nature*; but is *not* always necessary, or of any great Use for Us to know. But Truth in matters of *Religion*, is always of the greatest *importance*; as being the *Foundation* and the *Support*, of
Right

Right Practice. Men, upon *erroneous* S E R M.
Principles, may do what is Right by VII.
Chance; or the general *Probity* of their

Temper, may overrule the ill influence of mistaken Principles: But there can be no *certain*, there can be no *steddy* Rule of good Practice, without a Foundation of Truth. All *Errour* is founded in *Imagination* only; 'Tis a Shadow, without a Substance; 'Tis generally nothing else, but a careless following of *other* mens Opinions, or pretended Opinions; a lazy and formal Adherence to the *Customs* of the Age men live in, or the *Notions* which *happen* to prevail, like *other Fashions*, in *particular Places*, and among certain *Sects* or *Parties* of men. Principles of which kind, can be no better a Foundation of Practice, than mere Chance; And Religion built upon such a quick-sand, is, in the several Nations of the Earth, nothing at all more than the *Custom* or *Fashion* of the *Country*. Religion acceptable to God, who judges the Heart; must be, in the *Mind* of every *particular* Person, a Love of *Truth* and *Right*: A Love of *That* Truth and Right, not which is esteemed

SERM. such upon mere vulgar and customary
 VII. Acceptation, but which the Mind itself
 perceives and feels, and, upon Examination finds to be so in reality. Of This, the Mind of every uncorrupt Man, is by the Author of Nature made as competent a Judge; as the Eyes of the Body, are made fit to discern between Light and Darkness. And the Righteousness of God's future Judgment, (*That Judgment wherein men shall give an account of themselves, not in the lump by Sects and Parties, but every man singly and personally for himself; the Righteousness, I say, of that future Judgment*) must of necessity depend, upon every man's understanding for Himself the Rule he is to be judged by. *What This Rule is, can be of no difficulty for any man to discover, Natural Conscience, That original Light, That Candle of the Lord, which God has implanted in every man's Breast, tells him always what it is, with regard to the eternal Truths of Morality: And to them who live under the Light of the Gospel, the additional Precepts given by Christ in Scripture, are no less clear and conspicuous*

cuotis. *These Truths* of God, are, like S E R M.
an immovable *Rock*, the Basis and Foun- VII.
dation of That True Religion, which
approves itself to every man's *Understand-*
ing by clear Reason, and glorifies God by
making men like unto him through Vir-
tue and Righteousness in their *Practice*.
All *false Religions* consist, in *changing*
these Truths of God into a Lie, Rom. i. 25.
Either corrupting the Truth of God's
Creation, by introducing into Religion
things opposite to, or things which draw
men from, the Practice of Virtue, of
Justice, Goodness and Charity. Or cor-
rupting the Truth of God's *Revelation*,
by mixing with the plain simplicity of
the Doctrine of Christ, Traditions and
uncertain Notions of merely Humane In-
vention. *Truth itself*, both *natural* and
revealed, when separate from all corrup-
tions of *Men*, appears always with a na-
tive Lustre and Beauty, with a Strength
and Clearness of Reason, which the Scri-
pture elegantly compares to a *Light shin-*
ing in Darknes; which needs no *external*
Force, no *Violence or Compulsion*, no *arti-*
ficial imposing upon the Understanding, (as
the

S E R M. the *Inventions of Men* do,) to cause it to
 VII. be received and embraced; But it re-
 quires only an *unprejudiced apprehension*,
 and an *uncorrupt Will*, in order to its be-
 ing entertained universally in the Love
 thereof. It always tends also to promote
 mens *true Interest*; their true Interest,
 as well *Temporal* as *Eternal*: The *Peace*
 and *Satisfaction*, of every man's *Own Mind*
 in particular; and, in general, universal
Love and Good-will towards all *Others*.
 For all the *Contentions* and *Animosities*,
 all the *Hatred* and *Malice*, all the *Per-*
secution and *Cruelties* which have ever
 been exercised in the World under pre-
 tense of zeal for Religion; have in reality
 always arisen purely upon Account of zeal
 for matters of *mens own* Invention, never
 out of concern for the plain *Laws* and
Commands of God. And all the dark and
 slavish Bigottry, which has at any time
 tormented the Minds of particular men;
 has been owing to the Superstitious Er-
 rors, wherewith the Weakness of Some,
 and the Designs of Others, have misre-
 presented That *Truth of God*, which the
 Apostle stiles *the perfect Law of Liberty*;
 and

The Nature of Religious Truths.

155

and of which, our Saviour himself declares, *Job. viii. 32, Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you Free.* SERM.
VII.

Not without the greatest reason therefore, is that Exhortation of the Wise man, *Prov. xxiii. 23, Buy the Truth, and sell it not:* And *ch. iv. 7, Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get Wisdom; and with all thy Getting, get Understanding.* St Paul in like manner, *Phil. iv. 8,* in That elegant enumeration, wherein he reckons up every thing that can be thought to be excellent; and exhorts the *Philippians*, in the most earnest and affectionate manner, *If there be Any Virtue, if there be any Praise, to think upon Those things;* not without a particular Emphasis, placeth at the Head of All, in the very first rank, *Whatsoever Things are True.* And This may suffice, for Explication of the *First Particular* in the Text; the *Supposition* laid down, that *Truth* is something *real* in *itself*, and of importance to *Men*; something that *may* be found, and which we ought to seek after.

2dly, THE

SERM. 2dly. THE next Observation collected
 VII. from the words of the Text, is; that
 ~~~~~ such is the corrupt State and Disposition  
 of Mankind, that *Some* there will *always*  
*be*, who will set themselves to *oppose* the  
 Truth. Notwithstanding the Native *Ex-*  
*cellency and Beauty* of Truth, considered  
*in itself*; notwithstanding the *Strength*  
*and Clearness of Reason*, with which it is  
 generally accompanied; notwithstanding  
 the apparent *Benefit and Advantage*, which  
 the Knowledge of Truth always brings  
 to Mankind; yet so little sensible are Men  
 of the intrinsic Excellency of things, so  
 unattentive to the Strength of the clearest  
 Reason, so apt to be imposed upon in  
 judging concerning their own true Inter-  
 est; that nothing is more Common, than  
 to see the plainest and most useful Truths,  
 in matters of Religion, violently and  
 passionately opposed.

THE principal *Causes* of this Opposi-  
 tion; are in particular, *Ignorance, Care-*  
*lessness, Prejudice, and Vice.*

THE *First* cause of Men's setting  
 themselves in opposition to the Light of  
 Truth, is *Ignorance*. Meaning here, by  
*Ignorance,*



Ignorance, not a bare *Want of Knowledge*: (For the natural and proper Effect of bare *Want of Knowledge*, is, that Men forbear to pass Any judgement *at all*, upon what they understand not; and that they neither contend *for* nor *against* any opinion, before they have some *Reason* to determine them so to do :) But there is a *presumptuous* Ignorance, which *despises* Knowledge; And This makes Men *oppose* the Truth, before they understand any thing of it. Seest thou a man that *despiset* instruction? there is more hope of a *Fool*, than of Him.

ANOTHER cause of Men's opposing the Truth, is *Carelessness*. They blindly, and without any Consideration, follow the *Customs* of the Place where they happen to live; And the Knowledge of Truth, seems to them to be of no great Importance. They take up their Religion at adventures, not from the consideration of the Laws of *Nature* or of *Revelation*, but merely from the *Company* they *chance* to be educated amongst; And thus *All Religions* are put upon an equal foot, varying according to the accidental Temper of the  
Persons

SERM.  
VII.  
~

SERM. Persons among whom they prevail. Men

VII. of This disposition, *careless* of finding  
out the Truth, and consequently having  
indeed no Religion at all, but barely the  
name and profession of it; generally pre-  
fer *Any degree of Ignorance*, before the  
carefullest *Study* either of the *Nature of*  
*Things*, or of the *Laws of God*. To This  
Temper 'tis palpably owing, that so many  
*whole Nations* at this day, *Pagans and*  
*Mahometans*, never give themselves the  
Trouble to enquire at all, whether the  
*Christian* Religion be true or no; And  
even among the Professors of *Christianity*,  
(as they think themselves to be,) many en-  
tire Nations, full of Men very Learned  
and of great Abilities, yet never suffer any  
careful Inquiry to be made, whether the  
Worship of imaginary Saints, and of Ima-  
ges of Wood and Stone, and of Relicks,  
and of Bread; and innumerable other Do-  
ctrines and Practices, absurd Notions and  
superstitious Ceremonies; they never (I  
say) suffer any careful Examination to be  
made, whether these things are agreeable  
to the Plainness and Simplicity, to the  
Holiness

*The Nature of Religious Truths.* 159

Holiness and Purity of Christ's Religion, S E R M.  
or no. VII.

A *further* Cause of Men's opposing the Truth, is *Prejudice*. They are not perhaps naturally *ignorant*; nor yet of so *lazy and careless* a Temper, as to oppose the Truth merely to avoid the *Trouble* of studying it. But their *Prejudices* are so strong, that the *clearest Light* cannot overcome and dissipate so thick a cloud. They have accustomed themselves to found their Belief entirely in an *implicit* Reliance upon *Other Men*; instead of building it upon the Evidence of *Things themselves*, which is the Foundation of Truth. And Then, the Traditions of the Scribes and Elders and Pharisees; the Decrees of *Popes*, or the Determinations of *Parties*, evidently governed by Worldly Motives; shall have much more Weight with them, to perswade them to *blind* or *shut* their Eyes; than the *whole Scripture* of Truth, or the strongest and *plainest Reason* in the World, shall have to perswade them to *open* them. So little do they consider Those Admonitions of our Saviour; *Search the Scriptures*; and, *He that hath Ears to*  
2 *hear,*

160 *The Nature of Religious Truths.*

SERM. bear, let him bear: And That of St Paul;

VII. *I speak as unto wise men, (that is, to intelligent persons;) judge ye what I say, 1 Cor. x. 15. And of St Peter, 1 Pet. iii. 15. Be ready always to give an Answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the Hope that is in you.*

BUT the *Last and Greatest reason* of Men's setting themselves in opposition to the Truth, is the *Wickedness and Corruption* of their *Manners*; the Love of unrighteousness and debauchery, the Desire of Power and Dominion, the Concern they are under for the Defense and Support of a Sect or Party, without having Any Knowledge how far they are, or are not, in the Right. These are things, which make men to *shut their Eyes* against the Light, to love and choose *darkness rather than Light*, and wilfully to *stop their Ears* against all the Means of being better informed. Concerning such Persons, St Paul prophesies, 2 Tim. iii. 2, 8, *In the last days---men shall be---Boasters,---Despisers of those that are good,---beady, high-minded, Lovers of pleasures more than Lovers of God, Having a Form of godli-*



## *The Nature of Religious Truths.*

161

*ness, but denying the Power thereof,-----* SERM. VII. ]  
*resisting the Truth, men of corrupt minds.*

And these things *must be*, saith the same Apostle ; (i. e. 'tis fit and just that the Providence of God should *permit* it Thus to<sup>19.</sup>

be;) *that those which are approved*, (i. e. that those who seek and obey the Truth and Simplicity of the Gospel, separate from all *wordly* and unjustifiable *Designs*,) *may be made manifest among you.*

3dly. THE Third thing observable in the Text, is the *Direction* given us concerning *our own Duty*; that we ought in *Meekness* to *instruct* those who oppose themselves against the Truth. He who *himself*, *suffers* for well-doing, and for the Testimony of a good Conscience, is sure of *being* (at least *so far*) in the *Right*: But he who does Violence to *Others*; if *they*, whom he does violence to, be in a *right* cause, *He* is an Enemy to God: But if *they* be in the *wrong*, yet *He* dishonours the Truth, by acting unrighteously for it, and not knowing what Spirit he is of. *The Servant of the Lord, must* 2 Tim. ii. *not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt*<sup>24.</sup> *to teach, patient. We cannot always dis-*

VOL. III.

M

cern,

# 162      *The Nature of Religious Truths.*

S E R M. cern, *who they are that err thro' ignorance,*  
 VII. and *who thro' a vitious disposition.* (I  
 speak not here concerning matters of Im-  
 morality; for Faults of *This* kind, are e-  
 vident to *all* men.) But if we *would*, yet

Gal. v. 23. *Meekness is at all times necessarily a Fruit*  
*of the Spirit*; And we are commanded to  
*be patient towards All men*, 1 Th. v. 14.  
 towards them that *oppose*, as well as to-  
 wards them that are only ignorant of, the  
 Truth. *Who is a wise man*, saith St

Jam. i. 13. *James, and indued with Knowledge a-*  
*mongst you? let him show out of a good*  
*conversation his works with Meekness of*  
*Wisdom.* For---*the Wisdom that is from*  
*above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle*  
*and easy to be intreated.* But *Anger, rest-*  
*eth in the bosom of Fools*, Eccles. vii. 9.  
 And the *Wrath of Man, worketh not the*  
*Righteousness of God*, Jam. i. 20. being al-  
 ways a certain Evidence, that Men are  
 more concerned for some temporal Inter-  
 est, than for the real Honour of God and  
 Goodness. Men of a true Christian Spi-  
 rit, sincerely desirous to promote the  
 Knowledge of Truth and the Practice of  
 Virtue in the World, rather than the ob-  
 taining

## *The Nature of Religious Truths.*

163

taining of Temporal Power and Domini- S E R M.  
on for themselves are always willing to VII.  
confider, that *they themselves* are fallible; 

and therefore constantly endeavour to convince *Others*, by the Methods of *Reason*, and not of *Passion* and *Violence*. *Shewing all Meekness unto all Men, for that we ourselves also were sometimes foolish*, Tit. iii.

2, 3. Which *Temper*, is much more reasonable in point of *Truth and Errour*; when, even with regard to Faults of the *Will*, St Paul admonishes, *if a man be overtaken in a Fault*,-----*restore such a one*

*in the Spirit of Meekness, considering thyself, lest Thou also be tempted*, Gal. vi. 1.

(He speaks not of the *Crimes of Malefactors*, such as must necessarily be punished by the hand of *Justice*; But he means *such Faults*, as are to be cured by *Reproof*.)

Our *Saviour himself*, tho' infallible, and could not err; yet was *meek and lowly in* Matt. xli  
*Heart*: And rebuked his Disciples with <sup>29.</sup>

great Severity, when once upon high provocation they discovered an inclination to violent Methods; *Ye know not* (said he) *what manner of Spirit ye are of*, Luke ix.

55. Plainly intimating to all succeeding

S E R M. Generations, *wherein* would lie the principal Difference between the Spirit of  
 VII. *Christ* and the Spirit of *Anti-Christ*.

*4thly* and *Lastly*; H E R E is in the Text annexed a *particular Reason*, with regard to the *Persons to be instructed*; *why* our Instruction to them, ought Always to be accompanied with Meekness: *If God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth.* In the Original, it is; *Least God peradventure should give them Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth.* The Meaning is: We are to Instruct them with Meekness; least peradventure, by our Heat and Passion, we raise in them a just Prejudice against us; when, by meek instruction, they *might* possibly have been brought to Repentance, and to the acknowledgment of the Truth: And so *we*, by our ill behaviour, become answerable for *their* miscarriage. For, nothing can be a greater hindrance to men's being convinced, than the applying *Violence* and *Passion* instead of *Reason*: And nothing can give more Advantage to the Evidence of Truth, than the meek Behaviour of those who profess



## *The Nature of Religious Truths.*

165

S E R M.  
VII.

feels it. For *This* reason, we so frequently find repeated in Scripture the following Admonitions, which may serve for a proper Application of this whole Discourse. *Be ready always to give an Answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the Hope that is in you, with Meekness and Fear, 1 Pet. iii. 15. Give none Offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, 1 Cor. x. 32. Walk in Wisdom towards them that are without, Col. iv. 5. Have a good report of them which are without, lest ye fall into reproach, 1 Tim. <sup>Th. iv.</sup> 12.*

iii. 7. *Let your Moderation, your meek and exemplary good Spirit, be known unto all men, Phil. iv. 5. Blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation, among whom ye shine as Lights in the World, Phil. ii. 15. Having your conversation honest, that is, of good reputation, even among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as Evil-Doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation, 1 Pet. ii. 12. And in the words of our Saviour himself, Matt. v. 16. Let*

M 3

*your*

SERM. *your Light so shine before men; the Light*  
VII. *of your Meekness, Goodness and Charity; the Light of your excellent temper,*  
and universal Virtue; that the whole  
World may see your good works, and glorify  
your Father which is in Heaven.

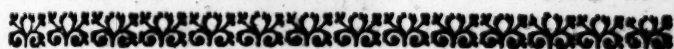


SERMON



# SERMON VIII.

Of CHRIST's calling Sinners to Repentance.



MAR. ii. 17.

*When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole, have no need of the Physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.*



THE Occasion of these words, SERM.  
was briefly This. Our Lord, VIII.  
having called his Apostle  
*Matthew* from the Receipt  
of Custom, and the Call be-  
ing immediately obeyed; he thereupon  
M 4                      went

SERM. went home with the Converted Disciple,  
 EVIII. unto That Disciple's house. *And it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat at his house, (ver. 15.) many Publicans and Sinners, of That Disciples former acquaintance, having followed them from the Receipt of Custom, sat also together with Jesus and his Disciples; our Lord being always ready, to take every occasion of exhorting Sinners to Repentance, and to give Them every opportunity of receiving such Exhortations. But the conceited Scribes and Pharisees, ver. 16, when they saw him eating with Publicans and Sinners; not considering, according to the Reason and Truth of things, that, not the conversing with Sinners, but the partaking with them in their Sins, or encouraging them therein, is only faulty; nay, that conversing with such persons, not only may be innocent, but, when it is in order to their Amendment, very praise-worthy also: The Scribes and Pharisees, I say, not considering This, but being full of Vanity and Pride, and valuing themselves upon an affected appearance of peculiar Holiness, in despising and setting themselves above the conversation*  
 of



of those whom in contempt they called *Publicans and Sinners*; pretended to wonder much, when they saw Jesus sitting at meat with persons of That character; and asked his Disciples, saying, *How is it that he eateth and drinketh with Publicans and Sinners?* Jesus, hearing their question, and knowing their Wickedness and Pride of Heart, replies in the words of the Text; *They that are Whole, have no need of the Physician, but they that are Sick: I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.*

S E R M.  
VIII.  
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IN discoursing upon which words, I shall 1<sup>st</sup> draw some Observations from the several *particular* expressions we meet with in the Text; and 2<sup>dly</sup>, I shall consider the *general* Doctrine of *Repentance*, as therein laid down by our Lord.

I. THE *Observations* naturally arising from the several *particular* expressions made use of in the Text, are;

1<sup>st</sup>, THAT *Sin* is to the *Soul*, what *Disease* or *Sickness* is to the *Body*: The *Whole*, and they that are *Sick*, are here, in our Saviour's phrase, the *Righteous* and the *Sinners*. And the Analogy, is very obvious

SERM. obvious and elegant. For as the *natural*

VIII. Health of the *Body*, consists in *This*; that

every Part and Organ, regularly and duly performs its proper Function; and, when any of These are disordered or perverted in their operations, there ensues Sickness and Diseases: So likewise, with regard to the *Spiritual* or *Moral* State of the *Mind* and *Soul*; when every Faculty is employed in its natural and proper manner, and with a just direction to the end it was designed for; when the *Understanding* judges of things according to Reason and Truth, without partiality and without prejudice; when the *Will* is in its *actions* directed by this judgment of Right, without Obstinacy or Wilfulness; and when the *Passions* in their due subordinate station, and the *Appetites* under the Government of Sober intention, serve only to *quicken* the execution of what *Reason* directs; then is the Mind of man Sound and Whole; fit for all the operations of a *rational* creature, fit for the employments of a *virtuous and religious* Life. On the contrary, the *Abuse* or *misemployment* of *Any* of these Faculties, is the *Disease*

## *Sinners to Repentance.*

171

SERM.  
VIII.

*Disease* or *Sickness* of the Soul. And when they are *All* of them perverted, *totally* and *habitually*, by a *general* corruption and depravation of Manners; then, as the *Body*, by an incapacity of *all* its organs for the Uses of *natural* Life, *dies* and is dissolved; so the man in his *moral* capacity, by an *habitual* neglect and dislike of all virtuous Practices, becomes (as the Scripture elegantly expresses it) *Dead in Trespasses and Sins*. And as, in *Bodily* Diseases, Some are *more* dangerous, and more likely to prove *mortal*, than Others; in which sense our Saviour says concerning *Lazarus*, *This Sickness* is not unto *Death*, ch. xi. of *St John's Gospel*, ver. 4; So, in the *spiritual* sense, the same Apostle *St John*, in his *1st Epistle*, speaks of *Sins*, which, according as there be *Any* or *No Hope* of mens recovering from them, either *are* or *are not* unto *Death*; 1 *John*. v. 16.

2. A *Second Observation* arising from our Saviour's manner of expressing himself in the Text, is; that *Repentance*, is not an *Original* and *Primary* Duty of Religion; but a *Duty*, only of *secondary* intention,

S E R M. intention, and of *consequential* Obligation:

VIII.

Our Lord *came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners, to Repentance.* The *Original* Duty of all rational Creatures, is to *obey* the Commandments of God: And *Such* Intelligent Beings, as have *always* lived in obedience to God's Commands, are *not* obliged to the Duty of *Repentance.* 'Tis *Sin* only, that brought in the obligation to this *secondary* and *consequential* Duty. And to those who *Have* sinned, This Duty is of *Such a* Nature, that 'tis a particular *Privilege* to them to be *permitted* to perform it. *Acts* xi. 18, When the Jewish Christians at *Jerusalem*, first heard of the Apostles being *authorized* to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, they said, *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto life.* Granting *Repentance*, does not signify, as Some Moderns have understood it, God's *working Repentance* in men, or *operating it* upon them; but it means, his graciously *allowing them the Benefit of Repentance*, or, his accepting *their Repentance* so as to render it available *unto Pardon.* Among such frail and degenerate Creatures, as *Men* in  
this



*Sinners to Repentance.*

173

this *present State* are; there are *None*, in *Strictness* of Speech, *free from Sin*; and consequently *None*, but what are obliged to this *Duty of Repentance*. Nevertheless, according to the gracious estimation of things in the Gospel, and according to the more usual acceptation of words in Scripture; they who, allowing for the general frailties and infirmities of humane nature, sincerely endeavour, in the constant course and tenour of their Actions, to live in habitual Obedience to the Commands of God; are stiled *Righteous* in *such* a manner, as that our Saviour came not, *comparatively* speaking, to call *Them* to Repentance. In the prayer of *Manasseh* King of *Judah*, we find this Notion expressed in very strong Terms: *Thou, O Lord*, says he, *that art the God of the Just*, *hast not appointed Repentance to the Just*, as to *Abraham and Isaac and Jacob*, which have not sinned against thee; but-----of *thine infinite Mercies* thou hast appointed Repentance unto Sinners, that they may be saved. The word, *Sinners*, here, 'tis plain, is not used in *That* sense, wherein *All men* are declared to be Sinners; but in  
*That*

S E R M.  
VIII.



S E R M. *That sense, wherein the Scripture declares*

VIII. *that the Wicked are an abomination to the Lord, and them that work iniquity his Soul hateth. Against these persons it is, that the Wrath of God is denounced with indignation, and the Threatnings of his Law are thundred with Severity. The*

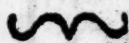
1 Tim. i. 9. *Law (says St Paul) is not made for a righteous man, (for against such, there is no law, Gal. v. 23;) but it is made for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for Sinners, for the unholy and profane,-----for man-slayers, for whoremongers,-----for Liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any Other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. In comparison with These; men who love Truth, and do Righteousness, and sincerely fear God, however they be encompassed with many infirmities, are yet stiled in Scripture not only just and righteous, but even perfect in their generation, walking in All the commandments of the Lord blameless; Israelites indeed, in whom there is No Guile; just persons, that need no Repentance: and of whom our Lord in the text declares, that he came not to call Them to Repentance.*

*Repentance.* There is a Repentance, to S E R M.  
which even the *Best* of men are continu- VIII.  
ally obliged; a Sense of their unworthi-  
ness before God; an acknowledgment of  
their Weaknesses and Follies; a conti-  
nual uninterrupted Endeavour to amend  
what they find amiss in themselves, and  
to improve more and more unto perfe-  
ction. But *This* is not That Repentance,  
to which our Saviour came to call *Sin-*  
*ners*: That *Total Change* of Life and  
Manners, of which when our Lord saw  
an instance in *Zacheus*, he said, *This day is*  
*Salvation come unto this house*; and in de-  
scribing of which, he calls it a *New Birth*,  
a being Born again of *Water and of the*  
*Spirit*. In contradistinction to which, and  
under the very same figure of expression,  
That *perpetual* Amendment of infirmities,  
which is the Duty of *Good* men, may well  
be represented in the words of our Sa-  
viour to *St Peter*, Joh. xiii. 10, *He that*  
*is washed, needeth not, save to wash his*  
*feet, but is clean every whit.*

3. A *Third* thing observable in our Sa-  
viour's manner of expressing himself in  
the Text, is the just and sharp *Reproof*  
contained

SERM.

VIII.



contained in this his Answer to the Proud and Hypocritical Pharisees. They were *Whole*, it seems, and therefore had no need of a *Physician*; They were very *righteous*, they thought, and therefore had no need of being invited to *Repentance*. They were the persons, who, St *Luke* tells us, *chap. 18. 9. trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised Others*; And therefore our Lord rebuked their *Pride*, by his Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican; telling them that the penitent Publican went down to his house justified, rather than the Boasting Pharisee; *For every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted*. They were the same persons, to whom the same Evangelist tells us our Lord said upon another occasion, *chap. 16. 15. ye are they, which justify yourselves before Men, but God knoweth your Hearts; For That which is highly esteemed amongst Men, is abomination in the Sight of God*. And thus likewise in the words of the Text, when the same Hypocrites were finding fault with *Jesus*, for keeping company with Publicans and Sinners, which *They* thought it beneath *Themselves* to do;

the



the Answer he made them, contains in it SERM.  
VIII.  
this Severe Sting; Ye who fancy your-  
selves *whole*, what need have ye of a Phy-  
sician? Ye who trust in yourselves that  
ye *are righteous*, what need have ye of  
being invited to *Repentance*? 

THESE are the *Observations* naturally  
arising from the several *particular* expres-  
sions made use of in the Text. That  
which remains is, to consider, in the

II. *Second* place, the general Doctrine  
of *Repentance*, as here laid down by our  
Lord: The Design of his Preaching, was  
to call *Sinners to Repentance*.

GOD being the *Author* and *Preserver*  
of our Being, and our Supreme Gover-  
nour; 'tis manifest that his *Will*, how-  
ever made known to us, whether by *na-  
tural Reason*, or by additional *Revelation*,  
is the *Rule* and *Law* of our Actions.  
This *Law* or *Rule*, all men, as they are  
rational Creatures, are originally obliged  
to obey at *all times* and in *all particulars*;  
nor can there in *any case*, in the nature  
and reason of things, be *any Excuse* or  
*Dispensation* for transgressing it. Never-  
theless *in fact*, in this present state, such

SERMON is the Frailty and Infirmary of our Nature, such is the Blindness and Erroneousness of our Understandings, such the Falseness and Corruption of our Wills, such the Power and Headiness of our Passions, such the Influences of innumerable Temptations surrounding us in a degenerate and unrighteous World; that there is *no man liveth, and sinneth not*. Now of Sin, in proportion to the several degrees of its aggravation, the natural and just Effect is Fear, and Looking for of Judgment, and mens being consequently *all their Life-time subject to Bondage*, Heb. ii. 15. By this Fear of the Divine Displeasure, joined with a Sense of past Follies, and of the unreasonableness of Sin in the nature of the thing itself; they who have in them a root of general good Disposition, and have not been corrupted with long and fixt *Habits* of Vice, are apt to be led to *Repentance*: And the consideration of the nature and perfections of God, That *Goodness and Mercy* which the *Light of Nature* teaches us must be found in the most perfect Being, gives them very reasonable Grounds of *Hope*, that

that their Repentance and Amendment S E R M.  
shall not be in vain. By These consider- VIII.  
ations, many worthy and well-disposed  
Minds, even in the *Heathen World* itself,  
regulated their Behaviour; and, forsaking  
the Corruptions of the World around  
them, made very great Improvements in  
the ways of Virtue. Nevertheless, since  
a man's performing his Duty for the fu-  
ture, is nothing more, but doing what is  
Then his Duty to do, and makes no Ex-  
piation for *Past* Offences; there could  
not but remain upon the Minds of Peni-  
tents still *Some* Uncertainty and uneasy  
Doubts. In revealing himself to the  
people of the *Jews*, God was pleased by  
degrees to clear this matter; *ascertaining*  
the Hopes, and removing the Suspensions,  
of *natural Reason*, by express *Promises*  
and *Declarations* of Mercy: Appointing  
first, in the *Law* itself, *Sacrifices* for *All*  
Offences, *except* the most *presumptuous*:  
Afterwards signifying, by his *Prophets*,  
that, upon a *real Forsaking* and *effectual*  
*Amendment* even of *Presumptuous* Faults,  
he would accept the *Sacrifice of a broken*  
*Spirit, a broken and contrite heart* he  
V O L. III. N 2 would

S E R M. *would not despise*: Inviting men, as in the  
 VIII. prophecy of *Isaiah*, ch. lv. 7, *Let the*  
 ~~~~~ *wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous*  
man his Thoughts; and let him return
unto the Lord, and he will have mercy
upon him; and to our God, for he will
abundantly pardon: And intimating, as
 in the liiid chapter of the same Book, that
 he had appointed an universal propitia-
 tion, to be reveal'd in his due season,
 who was to be wounded for our *Trans-*
gressions, and bruised for our *Iniquities*,
 and by whose stripes we should be healed.
 At length, in the fulness of Time, by the
 actual Coming of Christ, this great Dis-
 pensation was completely opened; and
Repentance and Remission of Sins, was
 commanded to be preached, in *His* name,
 unto all the Nations of the Earth. *Come*
unto Me, says he, *all ye that labour and*
are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest.
 And again: *Let him that is athirst, come;*
and whosoever will, let him take the wa-
ter of life freely. He has given us as-
 surance, that God wills not that *Any*
should perish, but that All should come to
Repentance: Nay, that as a Shepherd re-
 joices

joices over a Sheep that had been lost; so S E R M.
it is not the Will of our Father which is VIII.
in Heaven, that One of these little ones
should perish. Further; that *there is joy*
in the presence of the Angels of God, over
One Sinner that repenteth; Nay, that *Joy*
shall be in Heaven over One Sinner that
repenteth, more than over ninety and nine
just persons that need no Repentance. The
Meaning is; not that *Repentance* is in it-
self *more*, or *so much* valuable as *Inno-*
cence; or that a *returning Sinner* is *more*
acceptable, or *so much* acceptable to God,
as One that *never Sinned*: But that, in
like manner as either a man's *Self*, or his
Friend's, having escaped any extraordinary
and very imminent *Danger*, causes a great-
er and more sensible present *Pleasure*, than
his having never fallen into any such dan-
ger at all; and yet it does not at all fol-
low, that *Danger* is in any case *desirable*:
So it may very reasonably and consistently
be apprehended, how the *Repentance* of a
Sinner may cause greater *immediate joy* in
the presence both of Men and Angels;
than the *steddy Perseverance* of One who,
by the regular and uniform Practice of all

SERM. Virtue, has nevertheless deserved a far
 VIII. *higher degree of settled Esteem and Appro-*
 ~~~~~ *bation.* Now This authentick declaration  
 made by our Saviour, of the acceptable-  
 ness of True Repentance in the Sight of  
 God; is *That Glad Tidings*, which the  
 word *Gospel*, [*Ευαγγέλιον*,] in its original  
 Signification, properly denotes; That  
 publication of *Peace on Earth and Good-*  
*will towards men*, which the Angel, in  
 his congratulation to the Shepherds, calls  
*Tidings of great joy which shall be unto all*  
*people*; and which the Apostle St Paul  
 styles by the general name, of the *Grace*  
*of God which bringeth Salvation.* The  
*Means*, by which the Benefit of this gra-  
 cious Dispensation is originally applied to  
 Sinners, is *Baptism*: By which, they who  
 were converted from unrighteous ways  
 thro' the *Apostles* Preaching of the Gos-  
 pel, having *their Hearts* (as the Scripture  
 exprestes it) *sprinkled from an evil con-*  
*science, and their Bodies washed with pure*  
*Water*, received assurance of the Pardon  
 of their *past* Sins, and entred into a So-  
 lemn obligation to obey the Commands of  
 God for the *future*; And by which *at all*  
*times,*

times, they who are initiated into Christ's SERMON.  
 religion, are *admitted* to the gracious VIII.  
 Terms of the Gospel-covenant, and *obliged* to live in obedience to those Terms:  
 For the *Baptism* which *saves us*, the Apo-  
 stle expressly declares, is not *the putting*  
*away the filth of the flesh*, but the Answer  
 of a good conscience towards God. To  
 those who *renounce* this Baptism by *total*  
 and *final* Apostacy, the Benefit thereof is  
 entirely vacated: For the *One Sacrifice* of  
 Christ *once offered for us for ever*, being  
*totally and finally* rejected; *there remains*  
*no more Sacrifice for Sin*, but a certain  
*fearful looking for of judgment and fiery*  
*indignation, which shall devour the Adver-*  
*sary.* As to those who *never totally* apost-  
 atize, but yet, notwithstanding their *pro-*  
*fession of Christianity*, fall into the habi-  
 tual practise of *Any Wickedness* or *De-*  
*bauchery*; their Sin, without doubt, is far  
 more *inexcusable*; their Hearts more  
 hardened; their Return to their Duty,  
 much more difficult; than That of *such*  
*Sinners* mentioned in the Text, whom our  
 Saviour *came to call originally to Repent-*  
*ance.* For 'tis *better for men never to*

S E R M. have known the way of righteousness, than  
 VIII. after they have known it, to turn from the  
 Holy Commandment delivered unto them.



Nevertheless, even to such Offenders as  
 These, however unworthy, there still re-  
 mains a gracious Call to Repentance; and  
 the invitation which God has made by  
 his Son in the Gospel, he in abundant  
 mercy continues to repeat. Such persons,  
 are to be rebuked very sharply, but not dri-  
 ven absolutely to Despair. That which is  
 lame, ought not to be turned quite out of  
 the way, but that it rather be healed. St  
 Paul delivered a great Sinner unto Satan,  
 to the end that his Spirit might finally be  
 saved in the day of the Lord: and gives  
 caution, least even such an one should be  
 swallowed up of much Sorrow. He speaks  
 of many that had sinned already, even in  
 the Instances of great Crimes; and threat-  
 ens them upon Supposition they had not  
 yet repented. The Apostle St James de-  
 clares likewise; If any of you do err from  
 the Truth, and one convert him; let him  
 know, that He who converteth a Sinner  
 from the Errour of his ways, shall save a  
 Soul from Death, and shall bide a multi-  
 tude



tude of Sins. And our Saviour himself, speaking even of *Great Corrupters* of religion, threatens that he will cast them into a bed of *Sickness*, and kill their children (that is, their Followers) with death, except they repent of their Deeds. Indeed, in cases of *This* nature, where men, notwithstanding their Knowledge of the Truth, have been guilty of Great and Presumptuous Wickedness; their Repentance ought to be very exemplary, and their Amendment thoroughly and conspicuously effectual. To these persons, the Scripture says; *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your Joy to Heaviness; Humble yourselves in the Sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.* But for the smaller Failings, Infirmities and Surprizes, incident even to sincere and good men through the whole course of their lives; for the forgiveness of these, there is evidently continual provision made in the whole Tenour of the Gospel. Our Saviour directs us to pray daily, for the forgiveness of Trespases of *This* kind; and, by commanding us to forgive each Other

SERM. *Other* such Trespases, not only till Seven  
 VIII. times, but even till Seventy times Seven;  
 gives reason to those who constantly and  
 sincerely *indeavour* to obey his Will, to  
 hope for proportionable favour at the  
 hands of God.

THE *Inferences* arising from the fore-  
 going Doctrine of Repentance, are:

1<sup>st</sup>. FROM what has been said, ap-  
 pears the Folly of those corrupt Practices,  
 of *Confessions, Penances, Absolutions*, and  
 the like; introduced in the Church of  
*Rome*, (instead of true Amendment of  
 life,) by the Vanity and Ambition of  
 Men. For the Texts, concerning *retain-*  
*ing and forgiving* of Sins, on a misunder-  
 standing of which these corruptions have  
 been founded; do not, in their true Mean-  
 ing, put it into *Any* men's power, to sit  
 in the Seat of God; but only appoint  
 and authorize them *from* God, to preach  
 and explain That Doctrine *unto* Men, by  
 the *Terms* of which they must finally be  
 judged.

2<sup>dly</sup>. FROM what has been said about  
 the nature of True Repentance, it ap-  
 pears; that, among *Protestants*, and  
 Chri-

Christians of *all* denominations whatsoever ; *Confessions of Sin* ; and *professions of Repentance*, made daily in our *Prayers* to God ; if they be only *formal* and *ineffectual*, and produce not *real Amendment* of life ; are altogether as vain and useless, as the *Popish* Confessions made to Men. For to pray continually that our *Life hereafter may be pure and holy*, and yet at the same time return daily to the commission of *known Sins* ; is the highest hypocrisy and mockery of God. Concerning *these* persons it is, that our Saviour declares, *Luke xiii. 24. Many, I say unto you, will Seek to enter in, and shall not be able. They will Seek, not in the way of true virtue and righteousness of life, but in ways which they hope may be substituted in its place. That is, in the expression of our Saviour, they will build their House upon the Sand, and not upon a Rock.*

S E R M.  
VIII.  
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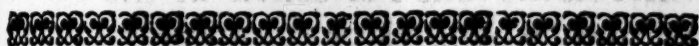
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SERMON IX.

The Excellency of Moral Qualifications.



ACTS xi. 24.

For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.



HERE is nothing in nature SERM. IX.
more amiable, than the character of a truly Good man ;

a Man, whose principal Business and Pleasure is to make all Men easy, with whom he has any Concern, in the *present* life ; and to promote, as far as in Him lies, their Happiness likewise in That which is *to come*. Other Qualifications, have their *Value*; and do, in their proportion, merit a just degree of

S E R M. of Esteem. Great Knowledge and Abilities, every where necessarily command Respect. Great Actions never fail to fill Men with Admiration, and to procure Applause. But of *all* Characters, That of *Goodness* is the most *lovely*; and approaches nearest to the Similitude of a *Divine* Perfection. *God* is the *Fountain of Goodness*, from which flows all the Happiness in the whole Creation: And there is no one Perfection in the Divine Nature, which 'tis *so much* our *Duty* and our *Glory* to imitate. He who most excels in This particular character, has the most of the *Divine Likeness*, that Man in this Mortal state can possibly arrive at; And therefore in the description given of *St Barnabas* in my Text, the expressions are used as Synonymous and of the same Meaning, that he was a *Good Man*, and *full of the Holy Ghost*.

T H E *Occasion* of the Character here given of *Barnabas*, was the *Concern and Desire* he showed, that the Benefit of True Religion might spread *far* in the World; that Men of *all Nations* might become partakers of the gracious Mercy of

of God declared in the Gospel, by being brought to Repentance for the Remission of Sins. *Barnabas* was the first person who ventured to introduce *Paul* among the Disciples at *Jerusalem*, immediately after his Conversion; when the rest of the Christians were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a Disciple, Acts ix. 26. Afterwards, when upon occasion of the persecution that arose about *Stephen*, the Disciples which were scattered abroad from *Jerusalem* for fear of the Jews, did some of them speak unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord *Jesus*, ch. xi. 19, 20. *Barnabas* was the person chosen to be sent forth from the Church in *Jerusalem*, that he should go as far as *Antioch*, ver. 22. Who when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with Purpose of Heart they would cleave unto the Lord, ver. 23. And then it follows, in the words of my Text; For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.

'Tis plain this character given in the Text to *Barnabas*, was intended as a description of an excellent person; of a person

S E R M. son *excellent*, not so much upon account

IX. of his *miraculous Gifts*, as of his *Moral*

Qualifications. And therefore the character deserves to be *particularly* considered, as a *Pattern* and *Example* to All who are desirous to improve in Christian *Virtue*. For though the Disciples of *Christ* are not in *All Ages* indued with *miraculous Powers*, yet they may and ought *always* to endeavour after those *Moral Qualifications*, which are, in Scripture-language, the

Eph. v. 9. *Fruits of the Spirit*; and, in St Paul's

1 Cor. xii. opinion, the *more excellent* ones too.

31.

The word, *good*, in this character of a *good* man, is used sometimes in a way expressive of *Virtue in general*, as opposed to *all Wickedness* or *Vice*; and sometimes as denoting a *particular Kind* or *Degree* of *Virtue*, as distinguished by way of *Excellency* above *other Virtues*. In the *former* sense of the word, a *good man* stands opposed to a *vitious* or *bad man*: In the *latter* sense, a *good man* stands distinguished, by way of *Eminence* or *Superiority*, above *other* even *just* and *righteous* persons.

I. The

1. The word, *Good*, is sometimes ex-
 pressive of *Virtue in general*, as opposed
 to all *Wickedness* or *Vice*. In *This* sense,

SERM.
 IX.

what *Good* is, every one knows: It needs
 not be defined or explained in Many
 Words; but every man's own Mind and
 Conscience may be appealed to, to tell
 him *what* it is. 'Tis not any thing that
 is disputed or controverted among Men,
 which Some call Good, and Others Evil;
 but what Mankind is well agreed in,
 and what even the Light of Nature it-
 self universally approves. 'Tis *real* and
substantial in the nature of things, so as
 not to be varied by any external Change
 of Time or Circumstances: And 'tis *un-*
questionable and *indisputable*, so as to be
 acknowledged by men of all Parties and
 of all Opinions, how much soever they
 may differ among themselves in Other
 matters, and how little Regard soever
 they may in Practise pay even to this
 undisputed Goodness itself. *Whatsoever* Phil. iv. 8.

things are True, whatsoever things are
Honest, whatsoever things are Just, what-
soever things are Pure, whatsoever things
are Lovely, whatsoever things are of good-

VOL. III.

O

Report;

S E R M. Report; if there be any Virtue, and if
 IX. there be any Praise; these are the things,
 in which This Goodness consists. In the
 Old Testament, 'tis thus described by the
 Prophet; Mic. vii 8. *He hath showed
 thee, O man, what is Good; And what
 doth the Lord require of thee, but to do
 justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk
 humbly with thy God:* In the New Testa-
 ment, 'tis by St Paul expressed thus: that
 Tit. ii. 12. *denying ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we
 should live soberly, righteously and godly,
 in this present World, under a sense and
 expectation of a Judgment to come. And
 by St Peter in the following manner,
 1 Pet. iii. 10: That a Man refrain his
 Tongue from evil, and his Lips that they
 speak no Guile; That he eschew evil, and
 do good; that he seek peace, and ensue
 it;-----for who is he that will harm you,
 if ye be Thus followers of that which is
 Good? ver. 13. This general Practise of
 Virtue, which determines the persons
 whole character, and denominates a Good
 Man; is what our Saviour represents in
 his Parable under the Similitude of Good
 Ground, wherein the Seed sown takes
 Root*

Root and grows, and brings forth Fruit, S E R M.
 being neither hindred by Rocks and want
 of depth of Earth; nor choaked with 
 Weeds, nor scorched up and withered by
 the Heat of the Sun: That is, when nei-
 ther irresoluteness of Temper, nor Fear of
 Persecutions, nor the Temptations and
 Allurements of Profit or Pleasure, the
 Cares and Business, the Deceits or En-
 ticements of a corrupt World, withdraw
 a Man from the uniform Pursuit and Pra-
 ctise of what is just and right. This is
 That *Sincerity*, or (in our Saviour's lan-
 guage) That *Honest and Good Heart*, which Luke viii.
 in the Scripture-style is opposed to *Hypo-*^{15.}

crisy. For *Hypocrisy*, in the language of
 the sacred Writers, does not generally sig-
 nify a solemn and formal *Pretense to Reli-*
gion without *Any real Belief of Religion*
 at all. This sort of Hypocrites, are but
Few in number; and no Man can be
 guilty in *This* kind, without expressly and
 distinctly *condemning himself* in every
 part of his *own* Pretenses. But the *Hy-*
pocrisy much more frequently spoken of
 in Scripture, and so generally opposed to
real Goodness; is *That Hypocrisy*, in

S E R M. which Men no less usually impose upon

IX. *Themselves, than Others; deceiving their own Hearts,* as St James expresses it, ch. i. 26. 'Tis *That Deceit*, by which Men fancy that they can become acceptable to God, by any external Profession of Religion, by Zeal for particular uncertain Opinions, by an exact Observation of any outward Ceremonies, by constant Devotion even towards God himself; without becoming really *Good Men*; without governing their own unreasonable Passions; without being just, beneficent, and charitable, towards All Mankind; in a word, without living in the Practise of those Moral Virtues, which are the eternal and unalterable Commands of God, and which are the ultimate End of every religious Institution. The only *Evidence* therefore, or certain *Mark*, whereby That *Sincerity* which denominates a really *Good Man*, can be distinguished from such Profession of Religion, as the Scripture deems hypocritical; is when the Fruits of it appear in a *general* and *habitual* Influence over *all* his Actions: When the Arguments of Reason and Religion, are

Moral Qualifications.

197

S E R M.

IX.

not only heard with Pleasure, and produce perhaps sudden and real Effects, in the Times and Places of publick Devotion; (which is what our Saviour expresses by *receiving the Word with joy*, like Seed speedily springing up in shallow ground, without having *Root* in itself;) But the true Evidence of *Sincere Goodness* is, when the Considerations of Reason and Religion influence Men habitually in the whole Course and Method of *Common Life*, in their *Business* and *Transactions* of all kinds, in their very *Freedom*s and *Diversions* themselves, in circumstances of *Temptation*, and in Cases attended with *Difficulties*, as well as in Seasons of professed Devotion: When the Precepts of Virtue, and the Doctrines of Practice, which true Religion teaches, are *imbibed*, *digested*, and converted as it were into the *Food and Nourishment* of Life: Which is what our Saviour, in the *Sixth* chapter of *St John*, calls *eating his Flesh*, and *drinking his Blood*: Just in the same sense, as *Wisdom* is introduced speaking, *Ecclus. xxiv. 21. He that Eateth me, shall yet be Hungry; and He that Drinketh me, shall yet be Thirsty.*

O 3

2. BESIDES

SERM. 2. BESIDES this *larger* and more usual
 IX. Sense of the word, *Good*, expressing *Virtue in general*, as opposed to *all Wickedness or Vice*; there is *another* sense of the word, as denoting a *particular Kind* or *Degree of Virtue*, by way of Excellency above *other* Virtues. And in *This* sense, a *good* man stands distinguished, by way of Eminence or Superiority, above *other* even *just* and *righteous* persons. *Goodness* in *This* sense, is universal Virtue, joined with a *singular* degree of *Benignity* and *Beneficence* in *particular*.

IN the describing or taking account of Actions; the phrase, *doing of Good*, is frequently applied *peculiarly* to the Virtue of *Beneficence* or *Charity*. Thus *Heb. xiii. 16*, *To do Good, and to communicate, forget not*. Again, *1 Tim. vi. 17*, *Charge them who are Rich in This world,----that they do Good, that they be rich in Good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*. And from hence, in the Characters of Persons, a *Good man* very often signifies, not only One who leads in *general* a *virtuous* Life, but who moreover is *particularly* eminent for *Benignity*

of Temper ; One who always does more for the Benefit of Others, than could in strictness of justice be demanded of him ; and exacts less for himself from Others, than in strict Right appears to be his due ; and readily takes greater Pains for his Neighbour's Advantage, and voluntarily undergoes more Troubles and Difficulties for the Good of Mankind, than, according to the common Measures and Estimation of Duty, he could be understood to be obliged to. Concerning This Character it is, that St Paul declares, Rom. v. 7, *Scarcely for a Righteous man will one die ; yet peradventure for a Good man, some would even dare to die.* And in This sense, the character of Good seems to be given to Barnabas in the Text. He was the person who first ventured to introduce Paul among the Disciples at Jerusalem, when the rest were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a Disciple, ch. ix. 26. And He being the person chosen by the Church at Jerusalem, to travel as far as Antioch, and confirm the Faith of those Grecian or Gentile Converts, which had been brought

S E R M. over to Christianity by the preaching of

IX.

Some of those Disciples, who, upon the Persecution that arose about Stephen, were scattered abroad from Jerusalem for fear of the Jews; he performed this Office, with a singularly good and charitable Concern for the Happiness of Mankind. Having seen the Grace of God, that is, having seen Evidences of God's universal Mercy and Compassion towards the Gentiles as well as Jews; he was glad, and exhorted them All, that with Purpose of Heart they would cleave unto the Lord, ch. xi. 23: For he was a Good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.

CONCERNING the latter part of This character, *full of the Holy Ghost*; 'tis to be observed, that the *Holy Ghost*, in Scripture-language, sometimes signifies the *Person* of the Holy Ghost, sometimes his *Miraculous Gifts*, and sometimes the *Moral* Effects and Influences of the Doctrine delivered to us by the Spirit of God. In either of the *two former* senses, a Prophet is spoken of as being *full of the Holy Ghost*, when he is actually *inspired* by him, or miraculously *conducted and directed*

ed

Moral Qualifications.

201

ed by him either in *Words* or *Actions*. S E R M.

Thus *Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost,* IX.
was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Luke iv. 1. And *Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost,-----saw the Glory of God,*

Acts vii. 55. In the latter sense of the word, a man is then said to be *full of the Holy Ghost*, when his mind, under the

Moral Influences of the Spirit of God, and of *the Doctrine which is according to*, Tim. vi.

Godliness, is, in an eminent manner, zealous for the promoting of Truth, and for the Practise of good Works. Thus the

Seven Deacons appointed by the Apostles, *Acts vi. 3*; were *men of honest Report, full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom*;

Men of *honest Report*, that is, of known integrity, of virtuous and upright character, and of exemplary Zeal. And in

the same sense, *Barnabas* is in my Text described to have been a *Good man, Full of the Holy Ghost and of Faith*. Upon a

like account, and after the same manner of speaking, very *wicked persons*, or men

intending to attempt any very *wicked enterprize*, are in Scripture represented as

being *filled with the Evil Spirit*. Thus

when

when

S E R M. when *Ananias* had projected within himself to defraud the Apostles, St *Peter* reproveth him in the following manner; *Acts* v. 3, *Why hath Satan filled thine Heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost?* And when *Judas* resolved in his own Mind to betray our Lord; then, the Evangelist tells us, *Satan entred into him*, *Luk.* xxii. 3. The Meaning of which is not, that the *Thoughts* of the Men, were the *Actions* of the Devil; But, that submitting to Temptation upon ill Principles, is being subject to the Devil; in like manner as acting upon good Principles, is being under the Government of God, under the guidance and influence of the *Spirit of Holiness*.

THE words of the Text being thus explained, 'tis obvious from thence to observe,

1st, THAT, with regard to a person's moral or religious character; being a good man, and being full of the Holy Ghost, are one and the same thing. With regard to the visible Works or Operations of the Holy Ghost, the case is very different. A man might speak with the
 1st *Cor.* xiii. tongues

tongues of Men, and of Angels; might S.E.R.M.
 have the Gift of Prophecy; might un- IX.
 derstand all Mysteries and all Knowledge; 
 might have all Faith, so that he could
 remove Mountains; and yet possibly at
 the same time, for want of real Goodness
 and true Virtue, might, in the religious
 estimation of things, be (as St Paul
 expresses it) absolutely Nothing. And
 our Saviour himself expressly mentions
 Some, who should be able to plead
 that they had prophesied in his name, Mat. vii.
 and in his Name had cast out Devils, ^{22.}
 and in his Name done many wonderful
 works; and yet, saith he, will I profess
 unto them, I never knew you; depart
 from Me, ye that work iniquity. The
 Reason of the difference, is plain: Be-
 cause these external miraculous Works of
 the Holy Ghost, being of Use only for
 the conviction of mens Understandings,
 which is not necessarily followed with a
 virtuous disposition of the Will; hence
 these outward Gifts may very possibly be
 found in an unrighteous person, who is
 not himself influenced in his own Prac-
 tise by the Arguments wherewith he
 preaches

SERM. preaches to Others. But the *internal*
 IX. Effects of the influence of the Spirit of
 God upon the person's *own Mind*; the
 Moral Effects of the *Motives and Arguments of Religion* taught by the Holy
 Ghost, and of the *Assistances* afforded by
 him; these cannot possibly be *separate*
 or *different* from true *Virtue*, because
 Virtue is itself *essentially* the End of Re-
 ligion, and the ultimate Design of all
 religious Influences. And therefore to be
 in *This* sense full of the Holy Ghost, and
 to be a good man, must necessarily be one
 and the same thing.

2dly, FROM what has been said, we
 may observe; that *moral Virtues*, and
 what the Scripture calls the *Fruits of the*
Spirit, are one and the same thing under
 different Denominations. *The Fruit of*
the Spirit, saith St Paul, is in all Good-
 ness and Righteousness and Truth, Eph.
 v. 9. And again, Gal. v. 22, *The Fruit*
of the Spirit, is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-
 suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith [Fi-
 delity,] Meekness, Temperance; *Against*
Such, there is no Law. These things,
 when considered in themselves, in their
 own

own *absolute* and *intrinsic* nature, as be-
 ing *Dispositions* of Mind *essentially* and
 unalterably *good*; are styled *Virtues*. When
 considered with regard to their *Effects*, in
 the visible *Actions* and *Practice* of men;
 they are called *Morality*. When con-
 sidered with respect to the *Root* or *Spring*,
 the *Fountain* or *Principle* from which
 they flow; namely, a right *Sense* of the
Reason and *Truth* of Things, and a just
 Regard to *God* the Judge of all; they are
 then styled *Religion*. Lastly, when con-
 sidered with respect to the *extraordinary*
 Supports they receive from the Revela-
 tion of the *Gospel* in particular, as being
 therein explained with *clearer* and more
distinct Declarations, inforced with *stron-*
ger and more *powerful* Motives, encour-
 aged and promoted with all the *Helps*
 and *Assistances* of the *Spirit of God*; in
 This respect, they are called *Fruits of the*
Spirit.

3dly, By This Rule therefore, may ea-
 sily be discovered and reprov'd, every
 kind of *Enthusiasm* and *Superstition*.
 Whatever tends not to *promote* real Vir-
 tue and Goodness; much more, what-
 ever

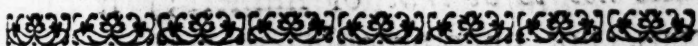
S E R M.
 IX.


SERMON. ever (under the appearance of Religion)
 IX. tends to *destroy* Virtue and Goodness; is
 the Produce either of *Atheism*, or of
Enthusiasm and *Superstition*. The Spirit
 of God, is the Spirit of *Holiness* and *Good-*
ness; and therefore whosoever lives in
 the Practice of *Any Vice*, is certainly, in
 the religious sense, void of the Spirit of
 God. All other Marks whatsoever, of
having the Spirit; are but *vain* and *en-*
thusiastical. If a man could *speak with*
the Tongues of Men and Angels, (as
 St Paul expresses it,) and *had all Faith*,
 so that he could work *All Miracles*; and
 be not a *virtuous* man; All This would
 be only the Operation of the Spirit of
 God by Him, for the conviction of O-
 thers; but To himself, of no Advantage,
 any more than to a *Sounding Brass* or a
tinkling Cymbal.



S E R M O N X.

Of HUMILITY.



L U K. xiv. ii.

For whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.



HERE is no Virtue in human Life, of more universal Usefulness than *Humility*; and yet none more difficult to be practised by a man's self, or to be rightly stated and defined to others. Pride grows upon Men insensibly by imperceptible degrees, and creeps in un-
 ken

S E R M.
X.

S E R M. ken notice of upon innumerable Occa-
 X. sions, and veils itself often under an af-
 fected Appearance even of *Humility* itself.
 For *true Humility*, as it is hard to define,
 so it is not always easy to know when a
 man has it: And whilst it is frequently
 described to be a man's having in ap-
 pearance a meaner Opinion of himself,
 than it is *possible* for him to have in re-
 ality; (for no man can *really think* that
 of himself, which he *knows* at the same
 time *not to be true* of himself;) it hap-
 pens, not uncommonly, that there may
 be great *Pride*, in a man's *pretending* so
 to think of himself, as he knows every
 body believes there is no just reason to
 think of him; and that there may be
 more and truer *Humility* in *Another* per-
 son, who without either *affected Humility*
 or *real Pride*, so thinks of himself as he
 ought to think, and so behaves himself
 as becomes his proper Station and Employ-
 ment in the World. For *true Humility*
 consists, not in *Imagination*, but in *Ac-*
tion; not in mens *appearing* to *think* ill
 of themselves, but in *behaving* themselves
well; it consists in carrying themselves
 modestly.

Of Humility.

209

modestly in the Performance of their present Duty, not assuming to themselves any thing above the character of their proper Station, not putting *themselves* forward in an eager and indecent manner, but, by the Practice of real and useful Virtues, causing *Others* to be desirous of their Advancement in the World. This is the Behaviour of True Merit; and the Method, which, in the Nature of Things, in the Judgment of the Wisest Men, and by the Appointment of God himself, leads modest and unaffected Virtue, to real Honour, and to a settled and established Esteem. *For whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* In the following Discourse upon which Words, I shall 1st endeavour to show *what* True Humility is, and wherein it consists; and 2^{dly}, propose some Arguments to perswade men to the Practise of it. Under which *same* Heads, it will appear at the same Time what *Pride* is, and by what Arguments men are to be warned against falling into it.

1st, I am to consider *what* True Humility is, and wherein it consists. And here,

VOL. III.

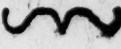
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because

S E R M. because the Circumstances of men are
 X. infinitely various; and the Practice of
 every moral Virtue, is diversified in as many different manners, as the Circumstances of the Case wherein it is to be exercised; therefore either *general* Rules cannot be given at all, or, if they be, yet commonly they are but of small Use, because they are lost in the endless diversity of the Application. On the other hand, *particular* Rules for every single Case, are as impossible to be laid down; because their *Number* would wholly confound the Memory, and so become incapable of being applied at all. The middle and most useful Way, is to mention the principal Heads only; which, being Few, are easy to be remembred; and yet to which all the rest, that are numberless, may with ease be occasionally reduced in Practice. In order therefore to explain distinctly and intelligibly, what true *Humility* is; it may be proper to consider it, with regard to the *Persons* towards whom it is to be exercised, and with regard to the *Things* wherein those Persons differ severally from each other. The *Persons*, in
 our

Of Humility.

211

our behaviour towards whom the Virtue S E R M.
of *Humility* is to be exercised, are either X.
Superiors, Equals, or Inferiors: and the 
Things wherein these several Persons differ principally from each other, are either their *Civil Stations* in the World, their different Natural *Abilities*, or their Religious *Improvements*.

1st, WITH regard to *Superiors* in general, true *Humility* consists, in paying them *cheerfully and readily* all due Honour and Respect, in those *particular Regards* wherein they are our Superiors, notwithstanding any *other* accidental Disadvantages on *their* side, or Advantages on *ours*. More particularly; with regard to Superiors in *Civil Stations* in the World, true *Humility* consists, in obeying them willingly in all things just and lawful; in submitting to the Authority, even of the froward and unworthy; in not despising their Persons, exposing their Weaknesses, or insulting over their Infirmities; but being truly sensible, that those of Us who think best of our own Abilities, might, in higher Stations, and under greater Trusts, find Difficulties we are

S E R M. not at present aware of; and very possibly
 X. not be able to see, or at least not find
 means to avoid, the Frailties we are generally so apt to censure in the Behaviour of our Superiors. With regard to Superiors in Natural *Abilities*, true Humility consists, not in submitting our Understandings to them blindly and implicitly, but in being willing and desirous to be instructed and informed by them; in not envying them the Advantages God has given them above ourselves; nor repining, but on the contrary *rejoicing*, at their being preferred or honoured, according to the Proportion of their true Merit or Capacity. With regard to Superiors in Religious *Improvements*, Humility consists likewise, in *rejoicing* to see the Practice of Virtue, and the Advancement of the Kingdom of God upon Earth; not grieving, but taking Pleasure, to find such Persons esteemed highly in the World, and proposing them to ourselves as Examples and Patterns for our Imitation. This is the Virtue of Humility, in our Behaviour towards *Superiors* of all kinds.

Of Humility.

213

2dly, TOWARDS our *Equals*, true Hu-
mility consists, in civil and affable, in cour-
teous and modest behaviour; not in formal
Pretences of thinking very meanly and
contemptibly of ourselves, (for such Pro-
fessions are often very consistent with
great Pride,) but in patiently permitting
our Equals (when it shall so happen) to
be preferred before us, not thinking our-
selves injured when Others but of equal
Merit chance to be more esteemed, but
on the contrary rather suspecting that we
judge too favourably of ourselves, and
therefore modestly desiring that those who
are reputed upon the level with us, may
have shown unto them rather a greater
Respect. This is what the Apostle means,
Rom. xii. 10, when he bids us *be kindly
affectioned one to another, with brotherly
love, in honour preferring one another.*
'Tis what the Wise-man had long before
exhorted to, *Prov. xxv. 6,* *Put not forth
thyself in the presence of the King, and
stand not in the place of great men; For
better is it, that it be said unto thee,
Come up hither; than that thou shouldst
be put lower in the presence of the Prince*

P 3

whom

S E R M.
X.



SERM. *whom thine eyes have seen.* 'Tis what our
 X. Saviour still more largely and distinctly
 recommends, in that Parable whereof the
 Text is the conclusion; St Luk. xiv. 7,
*He put forth a Parable to those which
 were bidden, when he marked how they
 chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,
 When thou art bidden of any man to a
 wedding, sit not down in the highest room;
 lest a more honourable man than thou, be
 bidden of him; And he that bade thee and
 him, come and say to thee, Give This man
 place, and thou begin with shame to take
 the lowest room: But when thou art bid-
 den, go and sit down in the lowest room;
 that when he that bade thee cometh, he may
 say unto thee, Friend, go up higher; Then
 shalt thou have worship in the presence of
 them that sit at meat with thee: The Ap-
 plication of all which, he subjoins in the
 words of the Text; ver. 11, For whosoever
 exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he
 that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.*
 Further; True Humility with regard to
 our Equals, consists, in willingly sub-
 mitting, for Peace sake, to many things,
 if not very unreasonable, yet otherwise
 such

Of Humility.

215

such as in our own judgment we should S E R M.
not chuse or think best of. *Eph. iv. 1,* X.
I beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the
Vocation wherewith ye are called; with all
lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering,
forbearing one another in love; Endeav-
ouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace;----- For unto every
one of us is given grace, according to the
measure of the Gift of Christ; i. e. men
have different judgments, different incli-
nations, different Gifts and Talents from
God, divided to every one severally as he
pleases; and therefore, to prevent Confu-
sion, where men otherwise are Equals,
the Duty of Humility requires, that they
should all be ready to submit to each
other, with all Meekness, Patience and
Good-will. *Col. iii. 12, Put on, as the*
elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of
mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind,
meekness, long-suffering; Forbearing one
another, and forgiving one another;-----
And above all these things, put on Cha-
rity, which is the bond of Perfection;
Charity, i. e. mutual Love and an affec-
tionate desire of Peace and Agreement;

S.E.R.M. For so it is explained in the words next
 X. immediately following; *And let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts, to which also ye are called in one Body.* The like Exhortation we find, 1 Pet. v. 5; where the Apostle not only directs, *Ye Younger, submit yourselves unto the Elder;* but he adds moreover, *Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with Humility.* And Eph. v. 21, *Submitting yourselves one to another in the Fear of God.* This is the Character of true Humility, in our Behaviour towards our Equals.

3dly; WITH regard to our *Inferiors*, Humility consists, in assuming to ourselves no more than the Difference of Men's Circumstances, and the Performance of their respective Duties, for preserving the regularity and good Order of the World, necessarily requires. Particularly, towards Inferiors in Civil Stations in the World, the Humility of a Governor consists, not in making his Authority despicable and subject to contempt, but in exercising it so, as to show that he is not puffed up with the Love of Power and Dominion, but looks upon it as a Trust committed to him,

Of Humility.

217

SERM.

X.



him, for the Benefit of those who are placed under his Inspection. He commands, without insulting; he reproves, with meekness; he punishes unwillingly, and never without giving evidence of Pity and Compassion. With regard to Inferiors in natural *Abilities* or Accidental *Advantages* in the World, such as Learning and Knowledge, Riches, Plenty, and the like; Humility consists, in not despising and contemning those, upon whom God has been pleased to bestow fewer Talents; but on the contrary in considering, that possibly *they* have some *other* Gifts, which may be wanting in *us*; and in being willing to *communicate* to *them*, the Advantages *we* enjoy; that *They* may be the better, for the Things wherewith God has blessed *Us*. The true Humility of a *rich man* consists, not in levelling himself with the Poor, but in being willing to assist them by relieving their Necessities: not in confounding the Distinctions of Men's Condition, which God and Nature has established; but in endeavouring to make the condition of the Meanest easy, and supportable to themselves.

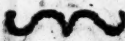
S E R M. themselves. And in like manner, the true

X. Humility of Persons endued with more *Learning and Knowledge* than others, does not consist in making a Show of being ignorant, (which may be a conceited Vanity or foolish Affectation;) but it consists in being willing to *communicate* what they know, and in sincerely desiring that all Others might attain the same Knowledge with themselves: After the example of *Moses*, who, instead of becoming haughty and insolent through the multitude of the Revelations wherewith God had been pleased to honour him; and instead of discouraging others, from seeking after the like Knowledge; on the contrary declared publicly, *Numb. xi. 29. Would God that All the Lord's people were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.* Lastly, Towards our Inferiors in respect of Religious *Improvements*, true Humility consists, in being rightly sensible of our *own many Infirmities*, even *those* of Us who may be apt to imagine ourselves to have made the *greatest* Improvements; and in being sincerely solicitous, for the welfare, and the Salvation

Of Humility.

219

tion of All men; Let nothing be done SERM.
through Strife or Vain-glory, but in Low- X.
liness of Mind let each one esteem other 
better than themselves; Look not every man
on his own things, but every man also on
the things of Others, Phil. ii. 3. It con-
sists, in endeavouring to influence Men
towards Religion, by Meekness rather than
by Power; Jesus called his Disciples unto
him, and said; Ye know that the Princes
of the Gentiles, exercise Dominion over
them; and they that are great, exercise
Authority upon them: But it shall not be
so among you; but whosoever will be great
among you, let him be your Minister; And
whosoever will be chief among you, let him
be your Servant; Even as the Son of Man
came not to be ministred unto, but to mini-
ster, and to give his life a ransom for ma-
ny, St Matt. xx, 25. It consists, in not
affecting to gain the empty Applause of
Men, by an outward ostentation of great-
er Piety than others: All their Works,
They do, (says our Saviour, speaking of the
proud Pharisees,) they do for to be seen of
men; They make broad their Phylacteries,
and enlarge the borders of their garments;
And

SERM. *And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and*
X. *the chief Seats in the Synagogues; And*
 *greetings in the markets, and to be called*
of men, Rabbi, Rabbi; But be not ye call-
ed, Rabbi; for One is your Master, even
Christ; and all ye are brethren; And call
no man your Father upon Earth; For One
is your Father, which is in Heaven; Nei-
ther be ye called, Masters; For One is your
Master, even Christ; But he that is great-
est among you, shall be your Servant; And
whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be aba-
sed; and he that shall humble himself, shall
be exalted, St Mat. xxiii. 4. It consists,
in condescending to those beneath us, and
not disdaining even to yield to them in
things indifferent; Be of the same mind
one towards another; Mind not high things,
but condescend to men of low estate; Be
not wise in your own Conceits, Rom. xii.
16. It consists, in bearing your infirmi-
ties patiently and without frowardness;
We then that are strong, ought to bear the
infirmities of the Weak, and not to please
ourselves; Let every one of us please his
neighbour, for his Good to Edification; For
even Christ pleased not himself, Rom. xv. 1.

It

Of Humility.

221

It consists, in *forbearing to judge or despise* S E R M.
those that differ from us in opinion; *Let* X.
not him that eateth, despise him that eateth
not; and let not him which eateth not, judge
him that eateth, Rom. xiv. 3. It consists,
in taking care not to *offend*, by haughty
and presumptuous behaviour, such per-
sons as by Meekness might be prevailed
upon to believe in Christ, or such as by
kind treatment might be kept from de-
parting into Divisions; *Take heed, that ye*
despise not one of these little ones; For
whoso shall offend one of these little ones
that believe in me, it were better for him
that a milstone were hanged about his Neck,
and that he were drowned in the depth of
the Sea, St Mat. xviii. 10. 6. It consists
in taking heed not to *impose needless Dif-*
iculties upon those under our Power; For
so our Saviour describes the Pride of the
Pharisees; *They bind heavy burdens and*
grievous to be born, and lay them on men's
shoulders; but they themselves will not
move them with one of their Fingers, St
Matt. xxiii. 4, and 1 Pet. v. 3. Neither
as being *Lords over God's heritage, but be-*
ing Examples to the Flock: Lastly, it con-
sists

S E R M. sists in using great gentleness, even to those
 X. that have offended; Brethren, if a man be
 overtaken in a Fault, ye, which are spiritual, restore such a one in the Spirit of Meekness, considering thyself, lest Thou also be tempted, Gal. vi. 1. And 2 Tim. ii. 25. In Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure would give them Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth. These are the Characters and the Instances of True Humility, with regard to our Inferiors in Religious Improvements; which was the last of those Cases or Circumstances, wherein for distinctness sake, I proposed to consider This excellent Virtue. And indeed there are No cases, wherein the Practise of Humility is more difficult or more intricate, than when men are tempted to Spiritual Pride, or to despise those who are supposed to be their Inferiors in religious improvements. Which Vice insinuating itself into men upon different occasions, and branching forth itself into many Instances; a brief mentioning some of the principal of them, may assist us still further in understanding the nature of the contrary

Of Humility.

223

ry Virtue. And 1st, there is a *spiritual* S E R M.
Pride in *presuming* to sin, upon the Sense X.
of the Virtues we are in other respects in-
duced with. This was the Case of *Uzziab*
King of *Judah*; of whom the Scripture
relates, 2 Chr. xxvi. 4, 16. that *he did*
that which was right in the Sight of the
Lord, according to all that his Father had
done, And he sought God in the days of Ze-
chariah, who had understanding in the Vi-
sions of God;-----and God made him to pros-
per:-----But when he was strong, his heart
was lifted up to his destruction; for he
transgressed against the Lord his God.
The same was in some degree the case of
Hezekiah, who having served the Lord
diligently, beyond all that his Fathers had
done; and having been accordingly blest
with great Prosperity; yet at length he
rendred not again according to the Benefits
done unto him; For his Heart was lifted
up; Therefore there was wrath upon him,
and upon Judah and Jerusalem, 2 Chr.
xxxii. 25. And This is a Fault so inci-
dent even to otherwise good men, that St
Paul declares even concerning *himself*,
2 Cor. xii. 7. *Lest I should be exalted a-*
bove

SER M. *bove measure thro' the Abundance of the*

X: *Revelations, there was given to me a Thorn in the Flesh, an Affliction, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

The Duty of Humility in This case, consists, in being always sensible of our Fallibility and our Danger; in working out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling; even when we think we stand surest, yet taking heed lest we fall; being (as the Prophet expresses it, *Is. lxvi. 2.*) of a poor and contrite Spirit, and trembling at God's Word.

2dly, There is a spiritual Pride of Vain-glory, in affecting a publick Appearance of such Actions, as in themselves are good and commendable. This was the great

Mar. xii.
38.

Fault of the Pharisees; who loved to go in long-clothing, and loved salutations in the market-places, and the chief Seats in the Synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts; who when they gave their Alms,

Mat. vi. 2.

sounded a trumpet before them in the synagogues and in the streets, that they might

vi. 5. have glory of men, and when they prayed, did it standing in the synagogues, and in

vi. 16. the corners of the streets, that they might be

seen

Of Humility.

225

seen of Men; and, when they fasted, put SERM.
X.
on a sad countenance, and disfigured their
Faces, that they might appear unto men to
fast.

In opposition to This, true Humility consists, in being contented to let the World be ignorant of the particular good Works we do; in so disposing our Alms, as *not to let our left hand know what our right hand does*; and in avoiding all Affectation, and publick Boasting, of our private Virtues. All which nevertheless, is so far from being inconsistent with that other Precept of our Saviour, of *letting our Light so shine before men, that they may see our good Works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven*; that, on the contrary, there is no greater and more effectual recommendation of Virtue, to the imitation of *reasonable and well-disposed Persons*; than when they find it sincerely unaffected, and which *vaunteth not itself*.

3dly, There is a *spiritual Pride*, of men *confidently justifying themselves*, and being wholly insensible of their own Failings, while they are very censorious in *judging and despising* others. Of This, our Saviour gives us an excellent instance, St

VOL. III.

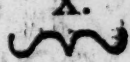
Q

Luke

S E R M. Luke xviii. 9. *And he spake this Parable*
 X. *unto certain which trusted in themselves*
 ~~~~~ *that they were righteous, and despised o-*  
*thers; Two men went up into the Temple*  
*to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other*  
*a Publican: The Pharisee stood and prayed*  
*thus with himself, God, I thank thee that*  
*I am not as other men are, extortioners,*  
*unjust, adulterers, or even as this publi-*  
*can: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes*  
*of all that I possess: And the Publican*  
*standing afar off, would not lift up so much*  
*as his Eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his*  
*Breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a*  
*Sinner: I tell you, says our Saviour, this*  
*man went down to his house justified rather*  
*than the other; For every one that exalteth*  
*himself shall be abased; and he that humb-*  
*leth himself, shall be exalted. The same*  
*Sort of Pride, is described by the Wise-*  
*man, Prov. xxx. 12. There is a generation*  
*that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is*  
*not washed from their filthiness; There is a*  
*generation, O how lofty are their eyes, and*  
*their eye-lids are lifted up. Again, by our*  
*Saviour; St Luke xvi. 15. Ye are they*  
*which justify yourselves before men, but*

## Of Humility.

227

God knoweth your Hearts; for that which S E R M.  
is highly esteemed among men, is abomina- X.  
tion in the sight of God. And by St Paul, 

2 Cor. x. 12. We dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves amongst themselves, are not wise: But we will not boast of things without our measure;---For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth. And Gal. vi.

3. If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

And again, by our Saviour himself, Rev.

iii. 17. Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked: speaking of a corrupt and prosperous state of the Church. The

Humility opposite to This sort of Pride, is that of St Paul, 1 Cor. iv. 4. I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me, is the Lord. And Phil. iii. 12. Not as though I had already attained, either were already per-

VOL. III.

Q. 2

fect;

S E R M. *fect* ;---but this One thing I do ; forgetting  
 X. *those things which are behind, and reaching*  
 forth unto those things which are before, I  
 press towards the mark, for the prize of the  
 high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And  
 that of Job, ch. ix. 20. and ch. xlii. 6.  
*If I justify myself, my own mouth shall*  
*condemn me ; if I say, I am perfect, it*  
*shall also prove me perverse ;---Wherefore*  
*I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*  
 The meaning of all which, is ; not that  
 good men should speak or *think* of them-  
 selves, in the same manner and sense as  
 wicked men ought to do ; but that when  
 they consider the infinite purity of  
 God and the perfection of his law, they  
 should then humble themselves in a deep  
 sense of their own many Follies and im-  
 perfections. 4thly, There is still a fur-  
 ther degree of *spiritual Pride*, in pretend-  
 ing to *Merit* at the hands of God ; as  
 those of the Church of *Rome* have pre-  
 sumptuously assumed to themselves to do.  
 And in opposition to *This* sort of *Pride*,  
*Humility* consists in that *Disposition* of  
*Mind*, which is recorded of the good  
*Centurion*, St Luke vii. 6. and Mat. viii. 8.  
 Lord,



Lord, I am not worthy, (I have no claim, S E R M.  
no pretence to expect,) that thou shouldst X.  
come under my roof: Wherefore neither  
thought I myself worthy to come unto thee ;  
but speak the word, and my Servant shall  
be healed. And of St Paul, Eph. iii. 8.  
Unto me, who am less than the least of all  
Saints, is this Grace given ; The expres-  
sion is hyperbolical ; But the meaning is,  
that he had not any the least claim of  
Right or Desert to that singular Favour, of  
being made the Apostle to the Gentiles.  
And in like manner, of Abraham, Gen.  
xviii. 27. I have taken upon me to speak unto  
the Lord, which am but dust and ashes. And  
of Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. I am not wor-  
thy of the least of all thy Mercies. And  
accordingly our Saviour directs his Disci-  
ples ; St Luke xvii. 10. When ye shall have  
done all those things which are commanded  
you, say, We are unprofitable Servants ;  
we have done that which was our Duty to  
do. Nevertheless, upon This Head of  
Merit, 'tis also to be observed, that there  
is a Fault even in the contrary Extreme ;  
a pretended Humility, in imagining, that  
as we cannot Merit, so neither are we

S E R M. able to *Do* any thing, but must leave the  
 X. Grace of God to do All for us. Which  
 opinion, does as effectually destroy Religion in *one* extreme, as the doctrine of *Merit* does in the *other*. For, as, according to the Doctrine of *Merit*, the *Reward* is not of *Grace*, but by *Claim of Right*; so, on the other side, if we are able to *do nothing at all*, then the *Punishment* cannot be by *Justice*, but by mere *arbitrary Power*, which is inconsistent with the Attributes of God. 5thly, There is yet a *higher* degree of this *Spiritual Pride*, in pretending to Works of *Supererogation*. This also is a fond Pretence of the Church of *Rome*. And This seems to have been the Fault of the Young man in the Gospel; who, when our Saviour had said unto him, *if thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments*; would needs reply further, St Mat. xix. 20. *What lack I yet?* This also is what St Paul so justly reproves, Col. ii. 18. *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshipping of Angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind;-----*  
 which

## Of Humility.

231

*which things have indeed a Show of Wis-* S E R M.  
*dom, in will-worship and humility: But* X.

True humility, in opposition to this false

and *proud* appearance of it, consists, in making, not our *own* Will, but the *Will* of God, the Rule of our Duty; *casting down imaginations, and every high thing, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ, not, of Men but, of Christ.* Lastly, There is a *Spiritual Pride*, in seeking after and being fond of *mysterious and secret things*, to the neglect of our *plain* and manifest Duty; In allusion to which, the corrupt Church in the *Revelations*, is stiled, *Mystery, Babylon the Great.* And in opposition to This, *true Humility* is that which the Wiseman describes, Prov. iii. 7.

*Be not wise in thine own eyes; Fear the Lord, and depart from evil: And Moses, Deut. xxix. 29. Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the Words of this Law: And the Psalmist, Ps. cxxxi.*

*1. Lord, mine heart is not baughty, nor mine*

Q 4

*eyes*

SERM. eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in  
 X. great matters, or in things too high for me:

And the Wise Son of Sirach, Ecclus. iii.

21. Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength: But what is commanded thee, think thereupon with reverence; for it is not needful for thee to see with thine eyes the things that are in secret: Be not curious in unnecessary matters, for more things are shewed unto thee, then men understand: For many are deceived by their own vain opinion, and an evil suspicion has overthrown their judgement. The only caution here necessary to be given, is that this entire humble Submission of our own judgment, is due to God only, in the Words of his own immediate and express Revelation: The paying the like deference to any human doctrine or human explication of doctrine whatsoever, without thoroughly examining it and understanding it perfectly; is not Humility, but Ignorance and Sloth. And This may suffice upon the 1<sup>st</sup> particular, what True Humility is, and wherein it consists.

SERMON





# S E R M O N XI.

## Of HUMILITY.



L U K. XIV. II.

*For whosoever exalteth himself, shall  
be abased; and he that humbleth  
himself, shall be exalted.*



N a former Discourse upon S E R M.  
these Words, I have endea- XI.

voured to show distinctly

*What the Virtue of true Hu-  
mility is, and wherein it con-*

sists. It remains that I proceed at this  
Time, to propose some *Arguments* to  
perswade men to the *Practise* of it.

And

SER M. And 1<sup>st</sup>, The Scripture frequently lays  
 XI. before us, the *natural* ill consequences of  
 Pride; and the Advantages arising from  
 true Humility, even in the *natural* Course  
 and Order of Things.

PRIDE makes men foolish, and void  
 of caution; and This puts them upon  
 doing things that bring them to Disho-  
 nour: *When Pride cometh, then cometh  
 Shame; but with the lowly is Wisdom,*  
 Prov. xi. 2.

IT makes men negligent, and impro-  
 vident of the future; and this often  
 throws them into sudden calamities; *The  
 Turning away of the Simple,* (in the origi-  
 nal it is, *the Ease, the Negligence, of the  
 Simple,*) *shall slay them; and the Prospe-  
 rity of Fools shall destroy them,* Prov. i. 32.

IT makes men rash and peevish, ob-  
 stinate and insolent; and This seldom  
 fails to bring down ruin upon them;  
*Pride goeth before destruction, and an  
 haughty Spirit before a Fall; Better it  
 is to be of an humble Spirit with the  
 lowly, than to divide the Spoil with the  
 Proud,* Prov. xvi. 18.

IT

IT involves men perpetually in Strifes S E R M.  
and Contentions; and These always mul- XI.  
tiply Sin, and are inconsistent with true  
Happinefs; *He loveth transgression, that  
loveth strife; and he that exalteth his  
Gate, seeketh Destruction,* Prov. xvii. 19.

IT disoblige mens best Friends, and  
gives their Enemies perpetual Advantages  
against them; and This often draws great  
inconveniencies upon them: *Before de-  
struction the Heart of Man is haughty,  
and before Honour is Humility,* Prov. xviii.  
12.

IT makes men vain and lovers of Flat-  
tery, rejecting those about them who  
would do them most Kindness, and liking  
those best who do them the greatest in-  
jury; And This causes them to be in-  
sensible of their own Disease, till they  
suddenly fall under Contempt: *A man's  
Pride shall bring him low, but Honour  
shall uphold the humble in Spirit,* Prov.  
xxix. 23.

IT makes men impatient of good  
Advice and Instruction, and That ren-  
ders them incorrigible in their Vices;  
*Seest thou a man wise in his own Conceit?*  
there

S E R M. *there is more Hope of a Fool, than of him:*

XI. *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason, Prov. xxvi. 12, 16; and xxviii. 26, He that trusteth in his own Heart, is a Fool; but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*

Lastly, IT fills men full of vain-glorious Designs, imploying all their Thoughts in self-confident Imaginations; and This makes them incapable of Religious improvements, and to have no relish of true Wisdom: *The full Soul loatheth the honey-comb, Prov. xxvii. 7; and xxv. 27, It is not good to eat much honey; so for men to search their own glory, is not glory.*

THESE are the elegant Observations of wise Solomon, upon the natural inconveniencies and disadvantages of Pride. In the other parts of Scripture we find likewise, several Remarks of the same kind. That *Pride* hinders men from examining impartially, into the Truth of Religion; *How can ye believe,* says our Saviour, *which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?*



only? Joh. v. 44. And, have any of the S E R M.  
Rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on XI.  
him? ch. vii. 48. That it makes men  
disdain to leave their pleasing Vanities,  
and think much to condescend to the mean  
Restraints and Confinements of Religion;  
Judges ix. 9, *The Olive-tree said,---Should*  
*I leave my Fatness? ----- And the Fig-tree*  
*said,---Should I forsake my Sweetness, and*  
*my good Fruit? ----- And the Vine said,*  
*---Should I leave my Wine which cheereth*  
*God and Men, and go to be promoted over*  
*the Trees?* ver. 13. That it causes men  
to take Offence at the Plainness and Sim-  
plicity of the Gospel, and thereby hin-  
ders it from making due impressions up-  
on them; *The Wisdom of God,-----which*  
*none of the Princes of This World knew,*  
1 Cor. ii. 8. *Where is the Wise? Where*  
*is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of*  
*this World?-----For ye see your calling,*  
*Brethren, how that not many Wise men*  
*after the Flesh, not many mighty, not ma-*  
*ny noble are called,* ch. i. 20, 26. There-  
fore let no man glory in men: If any  
man among you seemeth to be wise in This  
World, let him become a Fool, that he may  
be

S E R M. *be wise*; i. e. let him lay aside the Wisdom

XI. of *Self-conceit*, in order to become capable of Instruction in the *true Wisdom*, ch. iii. 21, 18. That it hinders men from performing the Duty of Christian Charity, one towards another; *Diotrophes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not*, 3 Joh. 9. Lastly, that in the execution of the Offices of Christian Authority, it turns men from a due regard of the *Intent* of their Office, to *temporal* and worldly considerations, and this leads them into a Snare, and brings them to Destruction: *A Bishop* (says the Apostle) *must not be a Novice, lest being lifted up with Pride, he fall into the Condemnation of the Devil*, 1 Tim. iii. 6. These are the *natural* ill consequences of Pride, which the Scripture lays before us; and which consequently discover to us the Advantages arising from true Humility, even in the *natural* course and order of things.

2dly, THE next Argument the Scripture makes use of, to perswade men to the Practise of Humility, is This; that Pride, as 'tis usually of *natural* ill consequence;

## Of Humility.

239

quence, so 'tis moreover particularly *S E R M.*  
*hateful to God; who represents himself XI.*  
as taking *delight*, to bring down the lofty, and to exalt the humble. 'Tis the  
observation of *Eliphaz* in the book of  
*Job*, ch. xxii. 29, *When men are cast*  
*down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting*  
*up; and he shall save the Humble person:*  
And ch. xxxiii. 14, 17, *God speaketh once,*  
*yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not;---that*  
*he may withdraw man from his purpose,*  
*and hide Pride from man.* God himself,  
by the Prophet *Isaiab*, declares, ch. ii. 11,  
*The lofty looks of man shall be humbled,*  
*and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed*  
*down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted*  
*in that Day; For the day of the Lord of*  
*hosts shall be upon every one that is proud*  
*and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted*  
*up; and he shall be brought low.* The  
Wise man in like manner, *Prov. iii. 34,*  
*Surely (says he) he scorneth the scorers,*  
*but giveth grace unto the lowly.* Which  
passage is, almost in the very same words,  
quoted by *St Peter*, 1 *Pet. v. 5, Be clothed*  
*with humility; For God resisteth the Proud,*  
*and giveth Grace unto the humble.* The  
Blessed

S E R M. Blessed Virgin, after the Angel's annun-  
 XI. ciating to her the Conception of our Lord,

 inserts into her hymn the same general Observation: *He hath showed strength with his Arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their Hearts; He hath put down the mighty from their Seats, and has exalted the humble and meek, St Luk. i. 51.* Our Saviour himself, taking a little Child, and setting it before his Disciples, when they were contending for preeminence; *Verily (says he) I say unto you; ---who-soever shall humble himself as this little Child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven; ---But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, i. e. whosoever shall by proud and contemptuous treatment discourage the meanest Christian, or drive him into any Sin; it were better for him that a milstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the Depth of the Sea, St Mat. xviii. 4, 6.* And again, in the words of the Text, upon another not unlike occasion; *Who-soever (saith he) exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.* The Reason why  
 Pride



Pride is always represented in Scripture, S. E. E. M. 2  
 as being thus particularly hateful to God; XL  
 is because it usually signifies, and always  
 includes, something of that *Presumptu-*  
*ousness*, that *presuming* to transgress inso-

lently and with a high Hand, which is  
 the greatest Aggravation of Sin, and the  
 most directly opposite to that meek and  
 humble Spirit, which *trembleth at God's*  
*Word*, which studies his Will, and is al-

ways fearful of disobeying it. *Wo unto*  
*them*, saith the Prophet, *that call evil*  
*good, and good evil; that put darkness for*  
*light, and light for darkness*, *Is. v. 20*;  
*i. e.* who are so insolent as presumptuously  
 to deny, either in their Words or Actions,  
 the most evident moral Differences of  
 Right and Wrong: For so it is explained  
 in the Words immediately following; *Wo* Is. v. 21.  
*unto them*, (not, who mistake, or are guilt-

ty of any Error or false opinion in this  
 matter, but) *unto them that are wise in*  
*their own eyes, and prudent in their own*  
*sight*; who say, *We will walk after our* Jer. xviii.  
*own devices, and we will every one do the* 12.  
*imagination of his evil Heart*: Who say  
*unto God, Depart from us, for we desire*

SERM. *not the knowledge of thy ways: What is*  
 XI. *the Almighty, that we should serve him?*  
 ~~~~~ *and what profit should we have if we*  
pray unto him? Job xxi. 14. Concerning
such persons as These it is, that the Scrip-
ture threatens; Every one that is proud
in Heart, is an abomination to the Lord;
though hand join in hand, he shall not be
unpunished, Prov. xvi. 5. It is generally
supposed by Divines, that the original
Sin even of the Devil himself, was Pride;
because St Paul speaking of a man's be-
ing lift up with Pride, calls it his falling
into the condemnation of the Devil. And
this, is not at all improbable; provided, by
Pride, be understood, not (with the vul-
gar) his attempting to resist God Almight-
ty by Force, which is absurd and impossi-
ble and childish to imagine; but his
presuming, upon the Greatness and Dignity
of his Nature, insolently to trans-
gress some of the Divine Commands.
And something like this, is the Case of
Powerful Tyrannical Princes, who proud-
ly despise the Thoughts and Expectation
of God's righteous judgment. For which
reason, the Prophet Isaiah so describes

Of Humility.

243

the Destruction of the King of *Babylon*, S E R M.
XL
that the Words are, not without probability, thought to be an Allusion to the Fall of *Satan*; ch. xiv. 12, *How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the Nations! For thou hast said in thine Heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the Stars of God, I will sit also upon the mount of the Congregation, in the sides of the North; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to Hell, to the sides of the Pit. And They that see thee shall-----say, Is this the man that made the Earth to tremble?-----that made the World as a wilderness, and destroyed the Cities thereof? This is the manner wherein the Scripture represents God delighting to destroy Tyrants, those proud and mighty Transgressors.*

ANOTHER instance of which, is the description of the Haughtiness and the Fall of *Nebuchadnezzar*; Dan. iv. 30, *The King spake and said, Is not This great Babylon that I have built for the House*

VOL. III.

R 2

of

S E R M. of the Kingdom, by the might of my Power,
 XI. and for the honour of my Majesty? But
 when his Heart was lifted up, and his
 Mind hardened in Pride, he was deposed
 from his kingly throne, and they took his
 glory from him; And he was driven from
 the Sons of men, and his Heart was made
 like the Beasts, and his dwelling was with
 the wild Affes, ch. v. 20; that is, his Un-
 derstanding was taken from him, and he
 imagined himself to be turned into a
 Beast.

AND the Instance of Pharaoh, Exod.
 v. 2, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey
 his Voice?-----I know not the Lord, neither
 will I let Israel go: Therefore the Lord
 sent all his plagues upon his Heart, and
 upon his Servants, and upon his People,*
 ch. ix. 14.

AND that of Herod, Acts xii. 21, *Up-
 on a set day, Herod arrayed in royal ap-
 parel, sat upon his throne, and made an
 oration; And the people gave a shout, say-
 ing, It is the voice of a god, and not of
 a man; And immediately the Angel of the
 Lord smote him, because he gave not God
 the glory; and he was eaten of worms,*
 and

and gave up the Ghost. The Angel of the S E R M.
Lord, that is, a sudden disease, by the XI.
direction of Providence, came upon him :
The Figure is the same as that which
St Paul uses, when he calls a temporal
Affliction the Messenger or Angel of Satan
to buffet him, 2 Cor. xii. 7. So 1 Tb.
ii. 18.

ANOTHER Example, is that of Ha-
man, in the Book of *Esther*; who when
he would have sacrificed a whole Nation
to his Pride and Haughtiness, God justly
suffered him to fall by the same ignomi-
nious Death which he had contrived for
another.

AND that of *spiritual Babylon* or Chri-
stian Tyranny and the Spirit of Persecution
in the *Revelation*, ch. xviii. 7, *How much*
she has glorified herself, and lived delici-
ously, so much torment and sorrow give
her; For she saith in her heart, I sit a
Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no
sorrow; Therefore shall her plagues come
in one day; death and mourning and fa-
mine; and she shall be utterly burnt with
Fire; for strong is the Lord God who
judgeth her.

SERM.

XI.

THE manner and Reason of God's proceedings in all which and the like Instances, cannot be more elegantly expressed, than in the words of the wise Son of Sirach, *Ecclus. x. 7, Pride is hateful before God and Man, and by both doth one commit Iniquity:-----Why is Earth and Ashes proud?-----The beginning of Pride is, when one departeth from God, and his Heart is turned away from his Maker: For Pride is the beginning of Sin; and he that bath it, shall pour out abomination; and therefore the Lord brought upon them strange calamities, and overthrew them utterly: The Lord bath cast down the Thrones of proud Princes, and set up the meek in their stead: The Lord bath plucked up the roots of the proud Nations, and planted the lowly in their place: The Lord overthrew the Countries of the Heathen, and destroyed them to the Foundations of the Earth. -----Pride was not made for men, nor furious Anger for them that are born of a woman. This therefore is the second Argument to deter men from Pride: the consideration of its being particularly hateful to God.*

3dly, THE *third* and last motive the Scripture lays before us, to recommend the Practice of Humility, is the *Example* of God himself, and of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. Properly and strictly speaking, *Humility* is not a Perfection that can be ascribed to God: Because where there is no room for *Pride*, there can never be properly any Exercise of *Humility*; and He whose Nature is of infinite and unlimited Excellency, can neither possibly assume to *himself*, nor have ascribed to him by *Others*, any thing beyond what is absolutely and necessarily due to him. Neither can he possibly *debase* himself, in the literal Sense; or in any wise *diminish* from his own superlative and unchangeable Excellency. Nevertheless, in a figurative manner of speaking, the Scripture *does* sometimes ascribe Humility to God, and recommends his Condescension as a Pattern for us to imitate. *The Lord, who dwelleth on high,—humbleth himself to behold the things that are in Heaven, and in the Earth, Pf. cxiii. 6. And Pf. cxxxviii. 6. Though the Lord be high, yet hath he re-*

SERMON *speet unto the lowly.* And the same manner of speaking is used by God himself, **XL** *If. lvii. 15, Thus saith the High and Lofly One, that inhabiteth Eternity; --- I dwell in the High and Haly Place; with Him also, that is of a contrite and humble Spirit: And ch. lxvi. 1, Thus saith the Lord, The Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Footstool; --- yet to This man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.* But the Example more accomodate to our Infirmities, and more generally alleged in Scripture, is that of our Saviour: Who, though he was Lord of all, yet was content *not to have where to lay his Head, St Mat. viii. 20.* Before whom it was proclaimed: *Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an Ass, St Mat. xxi. 5.* Who, though he was greater than All, yet declared concerning himself, *If I honour myself, my honour is nothing; It is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say that he is your God, St Joh. viii. 54.* Who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his Poverty

verty might be rich, 2 Cor. viii. 9. Who, S E R M.
 glorified not Himself, to be made an High X I.
 Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou 
 art my Son, Heb. v. 5. Who, when he
 was reviled, reviled not again; when he
 suffered, he threatned not; but committed
 himself to him that judgeth righteously,
 1 Pet. ii. 23. Which Example of uni-
 versal Humility in all Circumstances, he
 himself proposes to us for our Imitation:
 Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in
 Heart, St Mat. xi. 29. If I, your Lord
 and Master, have washed your Feet, then
 I have given you an example, that ye should
 do as I have done to you, St Job. xiii. 15.
 Whosoever will be chief among you, let him
 be your Servant; Even as the Son of Man
 came not to be ministred unto, but to mi-
 nister, and to give his life a ransom for
 many, St Mat. xx. 28. And the same is
 urged by the Apostle, Rom. xv. 2, Let
 every one of us please his neighbour for his
 good to edification; For even Christ pleased
 not himself. And Pbil. ii. 5, Let this
 mind be in you, which was also in Christ
 Jesus; Who, though he was in the Form
 of God, yet was not greedy to appear as
 God;

S E R M. *God; (so the words signify in the original;)* *but made himself of no reputation,*
 XI. *and took upon him the Form of a Servant,*
and was made in the Likeness of Men;
And---humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross: Wherefore God also has highly exalted him.

THESE are the Principal Arguments the Scripture makes use of, to perswade men to the Practice of Humility in general. There are moreover in particular, as many peculiar distinct Motives to practise this Duty, as there are different Circumstances and Varieties of Cases wherein it is to be exercised. Without practising it towards *Superiors*, there can be no Government; without exercising it towards *Equals*, there can be no Friendship and mutual Charity. Then, with regard to *Inferiors*; besides the general Example of Christ's singular and unspeakable Condescension towards us All, there are proper Arguments to deter us from Pride upon account of every particular Advantage we may seem to have over Others, whether in respect of our Civil

Of Humility.

251

Civil Stations in the World, or of our S E R M.
Natural Abilities, or of our Religious XI.
Improvements. If the Advantages of our
Civil Stations in the World, tempt us
to proud and haughty Behaviour; we
may do well to consider that Argument
of Job, ch. xxxi. 13, *If I did despise the
cause of my Man-servant, or of my Maid-
servant when they contended with me;
What then shall I do, when God riseth up?
and when he visiteth, what shall I answer
him? Did not he that made Me in the
Womb, make Him? and did not One, fa-
shion us in the Womb?* And ch. xxxiv.
19, *He accepteth not the Persons of
Princes, nor regardeth the Rich more
than the Poor; for they are All the Work
of his Hands.* Which same Argument
is urged also by the Wise-man, Prov.
xiv. 31, *He that oppresseth the Poor, re-
proacheth his Maker:* And ch. xxii. 2,
*The Rich and Poor meet together; the
Lord is the Maker of them All.* It will
become us also, to think upon the *Vanity*
and *Uncertainty* of these things, which
are so apt to puff us up: *For all Flesh
is as Grass; and all the glory of Man,*

as

S E R M. *as the Flower of Grass; The grass wither-*

XI. *eth, and the Flower thereof falleth away,*

1 Pet. i. 24. And Jam. i. 10. Let the

Rich rejoice, in that he is made low; be-

cause as a Flower of the Grass he shall pass

away. It may be proper likewise to confi-

der, that, if we are placed in High Stations,

we have a larger Account to give, to him

that ruleth over All; and possibly, while

we are honoured upon this single Account,

others beneath us may be valuable for bet-

ter and more really excellent Qualifications:

And it will not be long before Death and

Judgement level all worldly Distinctions;

And the greatest men, if they have been

wicked, shall then be forced to cry out,

What hath Pride profited us? or what

hath riches with our vaunting brought

us? All these things are past away as a

shadow, and as a Post that hasteth by. A-

gain: If we are apt to be puffed up with

the Advantage of Natural Abilities, such

as Learning, Knowledge, Wisdom, or the

like; it may humble us to consider, how

small a Degree of these things, we can at-

tain to even at the best: seeing that Know-

ledge, as Job most elegantly expresses it,

is

Of Humility.

253

is hid from all men, neither is it found in SERM.
the land of the living: And if we could XL
attain to much more of it, than we do; ch. xxviii.
yet still there is something far more Ex- 21, 13.
cellent than That: For Knowledge puffeth
up, but Charity edifyeth; And if any man
think that he knoweth any thing, he know-
eth nothing yet, as he ought to know, 1 Cor.
xiii. 1. Wherefore, Thus saith the Lord:
Let not the Wise man glory in his Wisdom,
neither let the mighty man glory in his
Might; let not the rich man glory in his
riches: But let him that glorieth, glory in
This, that he understandeth and knoweth
me, that I am the Lord which exercise
loving-kindness, judgement and righteous-
ness in the Earth; For in these things I de-
light, saith the Lord, Jer. ix. 23. Lastly,
If our Advantages even in Religious Im-
provement itself, tempt us to spiritual Pride
and Vain-glory, to judge or to despise our
weaker Brethren; the Scripture admo-
nishes us to consider, that all the members
of Christ, are useful in their several Stations;
I say to every man, says the Apostle, that
is among you, not to think of himself more
highly than he ought to think; but to think
soberly,

S E R M. *soberly, according as God has dealt to every*

XI. *man the measure of Faith, i. e. according*

to the Station wherein God has placed him in the Church; For, as (in our natural capacity) we have many Members in one Body, and all members have not the same Office; so (in our spiritual capacity) we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another, Rom. xii. 3. that therefore the Eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the Head to the Feet, I have no need of you; 1 Cor. xii. 21. that our Saviour himself refused not to be baptized by John Baptist, tho' a person infinitely meaner than himself; but on the contrary declared, that thus it becomes us to fulfill all Righteousness: that, how great soever our Abilities or Advantages be, yet the means by which we arrive even at These, are, not that we are

2 Cor. iii.

5.

1 Cor. iv.

6.

sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our Sufficiency is of God; that therefore we must learn not to think of men, above that which is written, that no one of us be puffed up for one against another; For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou, that thou

didst

didst not receive? The meaning of which S E R M.
places, is not, that God acts upon Men as XL
Machines, so as that They do nothing at
all themselves, but that the Gifts whereby
they are *enabled* to become eminent, (and
that not so much in *moral* Virtues, as in
miraculous spiritual Powers in the Church,
mentioned at large by St Paul, 1 Cor.
xii. These) are all, not their own, but
received from God's free Goodness and
Bounty. Further, we are admonished to
consider, in abatement of spiritual Pride
and Contempt of our weaker Brethren,
and of those who differ from us in mat-
ters of opinion; and with whom we are
apt to be angry for not complying with
our Notions; that there is a day a coming,
which, distinguishing men by their Works
of Piety and true Holiness only, shall le-
vel them in all other respects, and set
them upon Even ground before an impar-
tial Bar; where mens foolish pride and
arrogance, shall be entirely confounded;
and those who looked with scorn upon
others as infinitely below them, shall find
themselves placed upon an equal foot with
them whom perhaps they most despised:

Who

S E R M. *Who art thou, therefore, that judgest another man's servant? To his own Master, he*

XI. *standeth, or falleth, Rom. xiv. 4. and ver. 10. Why dost thou judge thy Brother? and why dost thou set at nought thy Brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. That, how great soever our improvements be, even in real Virtue and Righteousness; yet we have continual reason to take heed lest we fall; and Pride and Confidence, is the Security only of a blind man, who sees no danger: That even while we stand the most upright, we have nothing to glory of before*

Job xxv. God; For how can man be justified with
4. iv. 18. God? Behold, he put no trust in his Servants, and his Angels he charged with Folly; How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose Foundation is in the Dust! That the greatest and most eminently pious men, have been exemplarily humble in This respect; holy Job refusing to justify himself before God;

ix. 20. and Abraham stiling himself Dust and
xlii. 6. Ashes; and Jacob acknowledging himself less than the least of God's mercies; and St Paul calling himself less than the least

of all Saints: not that he *then* was so, SERM.
but that he *had been* a Persecutor of the XI.
Church of God. That Humility is the

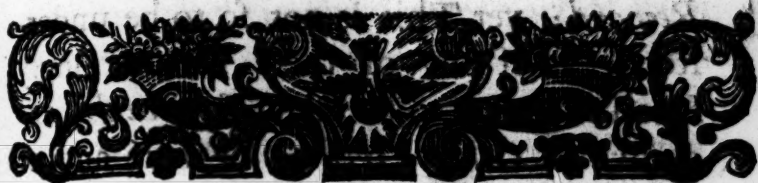
only means to entitle us to the Divine Assistance and continual Direction, and the best Help to a right Understanding in matters of Religion; (meaning always by Humility, not a blind and careless Submission to the Notions of *Men*, but an entire giving up ourselves to the Will of God;) *Trust in the Lord with all thine Heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding; In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy Paths; Be not wise in thine own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil; This is the Advice of Solomon Prov. iii. 5. And the Psalmist declares, Ps. xxv. 9. Them that are meek will God guide in judgment; and such as are gentle, them will he learn his way; And St Paul directs, 2 Cor. x. 5. to cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of God, and to bring into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ; Not our Understandings to the Opinions of Men; but our Wills, the Thoughts and Designs of*

SERM. our Hearts to the Obedience of Christ.

XI.

And the wise Son of Sirach advises, *Ecclus. iii. 17. My Son, go on with thy business in Meekness, so shalt thou be beloved of him that is approved; The greater thou art, the more humble thy self, and thou shalt find Favour before the Lord; Many are in high places, and of renown, but mysteries are revealed unto the Meek; And our Saviour himself professes, St. Matt. xi. 25. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes; Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. These are the Arguments the Scripture makes use of, to perswade us to the Practice of Humility; And they are all briefly summ'd up in the Words of the Text, Whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.*

SERMON



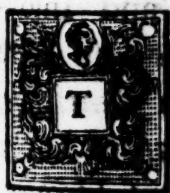
SERMON XII.

Of Poverty of Spirit.



MATT. V. 3.

*Blessed are the Poor in Spirit;
for Theirs is the Kingdom of
Heaven.*



THE *Beatitudes*, or Declarati- SERM.
ons of Blessedness, with which XII.
our Saviour begins his Ser-
mon upon the Mount; tho'
they seem each of them to be
a recommendation of some *singular Vir-*
tue, and to contain each of them singly
a Promise that such a *particular Virtue*
VOL. III. S 2 shall

S E R M. shall have its *distinct, proper, and peculiar*
 XII. *Reward*; yet This is not so to be understood, as if any of these Virtues singly specified, were to be taken *separately*, exclusive of *Other Virtues*; or as if any of the *Rewards* here distinctly mentioned, were to be looked upon as conferred *separately*, and *divided* from the *Other* Constituents of the Happiness of Heaven: But by a very usual and well-known manner of speaking, wherein a Part is figuratively put for the Whole; as, in *Other* places of Scripture, *Faith* or *Hope* or *Charity*, or *Repentance*, or the *Love* or *Fear* of God, do frequently stand for the *Whole Duty* of a Christian; and the single particulars of *seeing God*, or *being with God*, or of *living for ever*, are intended to include in general *All* the Blessings and Happiness, *All* the Glories and Injoyments, of the *Heavenly State*; so *Here* likewise our Saviour, in each *Beatitude*, must be understood *in general* to annex the promise of the Happiness of Heaven, to the *universal* Practice of our *whole* Christian Duty. And 'tis with singular Beauty and Elegancy, as well as with great

great Variety and Instructiveness of ex-SERM.
pression, that, in the *former* part of each XII.
Beatitude, he describes our *Christian Du-*
ty under the character of some *parti-*
cular eminent Virtue; and, in the *latter*,
he sets forth to us, under the like num-
ber of different *distinct Views*, the Glories
of his heavenly Kingdom: Representing,
in the *latter* part of each Beatitude, the
Happiness of That eternal State, under
such a particular Figure, and in *such a*
particular Light, as is most agreeably
correspondent to That *particular* Notion
of Virtue, under which he had in the
former part represented our *Christian Du-*
ty. Thus, when the Life of a Christian
is expressed under the character of being
poor in Spirit, - then his Reward is the
Riches of the *Kingdom of Heaven*: *Bles-*
sed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is
the Kingdom of Heaven. When his *pre-*
sent State is represented as a temporary
Mourning, then his *future* State is the
Comforts and the *Joys* of Eternity: *Bles-*
sed are they that mourn, for they shall be
comforted. When his Virtue is described
under the Notion of *Meekness*, in oppo-

S E R M. XII.  sition to striving violently for Dominion and great Possessions; then his Recompense is the *Inheritance* of the whole *Earth*; even the inheritance of That *New Heaven and New Earth*, wherein Meekness is to dwell and reign for ever: *Blessed are the Meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.* When his steady Love of Truth and Right, is set forth under the similitude of *hungering and thirsting after Righteousness*; then the Promise to him is, that he shall be fully satisfied, even to the utmost of his Desire: *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled.* When his Religion is considered as consisting, (as to the main Branches of it) in Acts of Goodness, Charity, and Mercy towards Others; then the Happiness annexed is, that He himself shall find Mercy and Compassion from God: *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* And, to mention but One Instance more; When the whole Moral Obedience of a sincere Disciple of Christ, is emphatically comprehended under the single Title of *Purity of Heart*; then the Joys of Hea-

ven are held forth to him correspondently SERM.
XII.
under *This* View, that he shall be admitted to See, and to dwell for ever in the Presence of, the *Fountain of Purity and Holiness* itself: *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God.*

OF *These Beatitudes*, the *First* is what will be the Subject of our present Meditations: *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* In discoursing upon which words, I shall first endeavour to explain distinctly the Meaning of the Phrase, being *poor in Spirit*; And then, *Secondly*, I shall draw some *Observations*, from the consideration of the Nature of the *Virtue* here spoken of, and of the *Reward* here declared to be annexed to it.

I. IN order to explain distinctly the Meaning of this phrase, being *Poor in Spirit*; 'tis to be observed, that those two different manners of expression, which we Now usually call *literal* and *figurative*, were in the *Jewish* language frequently denoted by the words *flesh* and *spirit*. *The flesh*, says our Saviour, *profiteth nothing*; *the words that I speak unto you,*
S 4 they

S E R M. *they are Spirit and they are life, Joh. vi.*
 XII, 63. His meaning is; He intended not
 to be understood *literally*, but *figura-*
tively. To *Be* therefore, or *Do*, any
 thing *in Spirit*; signifies *being* or *doing*
 that Thing *figuratively*, in the *spiritual*
 or *moral*, in the *religious* or in the *abstract*
 sense; in opposition to the *gross* and more
literal meaning, in which the same words
 may at *other* times be understood. Thus
 when the Angel in the Revelation *carried*
away St John in the Spirit into the wilder-
ness, (ch. xvii. 3.) the Meaning is, he was
 not carried thither *really* and *literally*, but
 only in a *visionary* Representation. By
 the like figure of Speech, St Paul, when
 he was *personally absent*, yet, because his
Name, his *Commission* and *Authority*, was
 to be made use of, as if he had *Himself*
 been There; I therefore, says he, *verily*,
as absent in Body, but present in Spirit,
 1 Cor. v. 3; and again, (Col. ii. 5.)
Though I be absent in the Flesh, yet am I
with you in the Spirit, jaying and behold-
ing your Order. And in a still more *sub-*
lime Use of the same Metaphor, *Acts xx.*
 22. while he was yet at full liberty, and
 had

had no violence offered him, yet, prophetically foreseeing that *Bonds and Afflictions* were coming upon him, *Behold*, says he, *I go Bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem*. Upon the same Ground of expression, *That Moral Holiness and Purity of the Gospel*, which is opposed to the *ritual and ceremonious Performance of the Jewish Law*, our Saviour calls *Worshipping the Father in Spirit and in Truth*, John iv. 23. And *That absolute departing from all unrighteousness*, so essentially required in the Gospel, of which the Jewish Circumcision was but a Type or Emblem; is by the Apostle most elegantly stiled, *Circumcision in the Spirit*, Rom. ii. 28. *That is not Circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh: But—Circumcision is That of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God: For We are the Circumcision*, (Phil. iii. 3.) *which worship God in the Spirit,—and have no confidence in the flesh*. We Christians, says he, if, according to our Profession, we purify ourselves from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, We are the *True circumcision*; while the unbelieving Jews, if they

SERM. they continue impenitent, are, notwithstanding
 XII. standing the Covenant of *literal* circumcision, rejected as being, in the sight of God, *uncircumcised in Heart*, Acts vii. 51.

ANSWERABLE therefore to this figurative manner of expression in so many other places; the Phrase in the Text, *Poor in Spirit*, in contradistinction to *literal Poverty of Estate*, signifies a *Temper of Mind*, disengaged from, and sitting loose to, the *Covetous* and *Ambitious* Desires of the present World: That *moderate* and good Temper or Disposition of mind, which causes those who *have* Riches, not to set their *Hearts* upon them, not to *abuse* them, not to *trust* in them, but to employ them virtuously to the glory of God, and to be at all times willing rather to part with them, than betray the Interest of Truth and Virtue: And which, for the same reason, causes those who *have no* riches, to be *contented*, and not *mur-mur-ing*, nor *unthankful* towards God, but willing rather to continue *always* in a mean and low estate, than to gain Riches by unrighteous and unlawful Methods. This is being *poor in Spirit*. This is what the

Of Poverty of Spirit.

267

the Prophet *Isaiah* describes, ch. lxvi. 2. To S E R M.
This man will I look, saith the Lord; even XII.
to Him that is Poor; to him that is of a
contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.
This is the Temper of those whom St
James calls the *Poor of this World, Rich*
in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom: The
Temper, of which St Paul declares, that
Godliness with Contentment is great Gain;
and which our Saviour describes in his
character of the Church of *Smyrna*, Rev.
ii. 9. *I know thy works, and tribulation,*
and poverty; but thou art Rich: Rich in
Virtue, Rich in Good Works, Rich to-
wards God. According to *This* account
of the virtue of being *poor in Spirit*; an
Eminent Instance thereof was the Practice
of *Moses*, when he refused to be called the
Son of *Pharaoh's* daughter, choosing rather
to suffer affliction with the people of God,
than to enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a Sea-
son. And the contrary Spirit, is That
which our Saviour speaks of, Luke xii. 21.
So is he that layeth up treasure for himself,
and is not rich towards God.

AND

SERM. AND now, having at large explained
 XII. (which was the *First* thing proposed,) the
 ~~~~~ Meaning of this Phrase, being *Poor in Spirit*; It remains in the

II. *Second* place, that I proceed to draw some *Observations*, from the consideration of the Nature of the *Virtue* here spoken of, and of the *Reward* here declared to be annext to it: *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* And

1<sup>st</sup>. FROM what has been said, it appears, that persons of *All* ranks, and conditions whatsoever, are *equally* concerned, in the *Admonition* included in the declaration here made by our Lord. *Poor* and *Rich*, the *Meanest* and the *Greatest*, are equally *Capable* of being, and equally *obliged* to be, *Poor in Spirit*. A person of the *largest* and most *plentiful* Possessions; if he has obtained them by *lawful*, and *honourable* Methods; if they make him not *insolent*, and *oppressive* to his Neighbours; if he uses them with *Sobriety*, *Moderation* and *Temperance*; if he be willing to *relieve* the Necessities of those that want, and be rich in *good Works* as well



well as in *Possessions*; if, being *Rich in S* E R M. *this world*, he be not *high-minded*, nor XII. *trusts in uncertain Riches*, but in the *Living God*, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; if he does good, and is ready to communicate, laying up in store for himself a good *Foundation against the time to come*, that he may lay hold on *eternal Life*; In a word, if he prefers the *Commandments of God*, before the *Increase of his Worldly Interest*; and is willing upon any occasion, to run the hazard of losing what he possesses, rather than depart from the *Ways of Truth and Virtue*: This man; tho' he possessed the *Wealth of the Indies*, and exceeded even *Solomon* in all his *Grandeur*; yet still he would be included in the description given by our Saviour in the Text, and would be intitled to the *Blessedness of being Poor in Spirit*. On the other side, One who is literally poor; if he be *unthankful*, and *complaining against God*; if his Poverty be brought upon himself, by *Debauchery* or *Idleness*; if he be *vitious* as far as his *Circumstances* inable him, and would  
stick

SERM. stick at *no unrighteous Practises* to advance

XII. his Fortune: Such an one, tho' he be in the *Lowest Poverty of Estate*, yet can in no wise come under the denomination of being *Poor in Spirit*. 'Tis evident therefore, that these words of our Lord in the Text, do not relate to men's *external Circumstances* or *Condition* in the *World*, but to the *Temper* or *Disposition* of their *Minds*; and consequently that the *Advice* included in This *Beatitude* or *Declaration of Blessedness*, equally concerns persons of *All Ranks* and *Estates* whatsoever. The *Poor*, by Contentedness, Patience, Resignation to the Will of God, and by the Exercise of such Other virtues as are more peculiarly proper to a mean and low estate; and the *Rich*, by preferring at all times the Commands of God, before either the Increase or the Preservation of their Wealth; are (as I said) equally *Capable* of being, and equally *obliged* to be, *Poor in Spirit*. Nevertheless, tho' the *Virtue* here recommended, is undoubtedly the *Common Duty* of *Both*; yet, since the *Poor* are in This particular under *Fewer Temptations*, and can withdraw their

## Of Poverty of Spirit.

271

their Affections from such an Adherence S E R M.  
to the World as is the chief Impediment XII.  
of a Christian life, with much less diffi-  
culty than the *Rich* can do; and since,  
upon *This* account, our Lord and his A-  
postles do very frequently pronounce ab-  
solutely and in general, *Wo* to the *Rich*,  
and *Blessedness* to the *Poor*, in such large  
and unlimited expressions, as may easily  
be mistaken unless interpreted according  
to the Analogy of the more distinct man-  
ners of speaking used in *Other* places:  
Therefore

2dly, I observe, that there is contained  
in the Text, a particular Ground of  
*Comfort and Support*, to those who are  
*Poor and Destitute*, and under *Mean Cir-*  
*cumstances* in the World; and particular  
matter of *Caution*, to those who abound  
in *Riches and Power* and the *Good things*  
of this *present Life*. The *Duty* here re-  
commended by our Lord, of being *Poor*  
in *Spirit*, is (as I have already observed)  
equally obligatory to persons of *All* ranks  
and conditions whatsoever; and the *Pro-*  
*mise* annexed, is to *All*, in whatever sta-  
tion they be in the World, who shall at-  
tain

S E R M. tain That Good Temper and Disposition  
 XII. of Mind. But now this excellent Temper, this Virtue of being disengaged from the *Covetous* and *Ambitious* Desires of the World, is what the *Poor* are *naturally* led to by their very Circumstances; being under the Advantage of escaping Many Temptations, which Others are continually subject to; and being perpetually called upon by the *Afflictions* of *This* life, to turn their Thoughts to the expectation of a *Better*. It ought therefore to be matter of Just *Comfort* and *Support*, nay even of *Thankfulness* too, under many kinds of temporal Wants and Afflictions; to consider how great an Advantage such circumstances give men, of obtaining this virtue of being *poor in Spirit*: Which our Saviour looked upon as so *natural* and *easy*, and so *likely* to be practised by persons in That State, that, in places parallel to the Text, he sometimes uses that general and seemingly unlimited expression; *Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God*; and, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*. For the same reason, on the *other* side, to those

Luke vi.

20.

Mat. v. 4.



## Of Poverty of Spirit.

273

those who abound in *Riches* and *Power* SERM. XII.  
and the *Good things* of this present Life, the Text plainly suggests *particular* matter

of *Caution*; in annexing the heavenly Reward to *That* Temper and Disposition of Mind, which *They in particular* are surrounded with so many Temptations to depart from, that our Saviour sometimes pronounces in words *seemingly absolute*,

*Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation.* Luk. vi. 24. 'Tis evident,

his Meaning cannot be, to represent *Riches* as a *Crime*; For he elsewhere expressly explains himself to his Disciples, that he meant not to blame those who *have*, but those who (to the neglect of God and Virtue) *trust in Riches*: But his Design clearly was, to admonish and put us in mind, how *dangerous* a state, Great Prosperity generally is; how *full of Temptation*, how ready to *puff* men up; how apt to make them *covetous, insolent and ambitious*; and to destroy in them that *meek, that equitable, that moderate* disposition of mind, which in the Text is stiled being *poor in Spirit*. St Paul gives us a remarkable instance of an ill effect in this

VOL. III.

T

kind,

SERM. kind, even of a *little Prosperity*; when  
 XII. the *Corinthians* falling into Divisions among themselves, began to be *puffed up* for  
 I Cor. iv. 8. *one against another*: Now, says he, ye are full, now ye are Rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us. And our Saviour, in his Admonition to the Church of *Laodicea*, hints at a like case, Rev. iii. 17, *Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of Nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.*

3dly, A *Third observation* which may be made upon the words of the Text, is; that from the *Reason* our Saviour here gives, *why* he pronounces the Poor in Spirit to be Blessed; (*Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*;) From *this Reason*, I say, here annexed by our Saviour, it evidently appears, that *however excellent Virtue really* is in itself, and *truly desirable* even for its own sake; yet neither are the highest Improvements in Religion, any way inconsistent with having respect to the recompense of Reward; nor is the Practice of Virtue (as some have absurdly argued with

with a most *Vain Affectation*) at all mer- S E R M.  
XII.  
cenary, when founded upon a View to  
the Happiness of Heaven. *Mercenariness*  
supposes always that Something *Wrong*  
is done, for the sake of such *Lucre* as  
a virtuous man can never purchase upon  
*Such Terms*. But the Happiness of *Hea-*  
*ven*, consists *itself* in, and is essentially  
conjoined with, the perfection of *Virtue*;  
And the expectation and view of *This*  
Reward, is *itself* an *immediate Act*, of  
the *Virtue* of *depending upon God*. Were  
*Temporal Prosperity*, the *certain* and *con-*  
*stant* and at all times the *immediate Reward*  
of *Virtue*; it might indeed be alleged, *not*  
that the Practice of it was *mercenary*;  
because *That* always supposes the doing  
of something which is in itself *blame-*  
*worthy*; but it might indeed be alleged,  
in *diminution of the Excellency* of it, as  
we find it was in the case of *Job* in the  
time of his Prosperity, *Does Job serve*  
*God for nought?* But as the Practice of  
*Virtue* is in reality *far from being secure*  
of any *temporal Recompence*, and the *Re-*  
*ward* it principally relies upon is *spiritual*  
and *heavenly*; the expectation of *Such Re-*  
ward,

S E R M. ward, far from being any diminution, is

XII. *itself* (as I now observed), a proper *Act* of *Virtue*, and of *Dependence upon God*. In the *Antient, Heathen World*, the *Virtue* of the *Best and Bravest men*, under the *Light of Nature and Reason*, consisted in their *Trusting in God*; in their *Trusting, without* any exprefs revealed *Promise*, that the *Judge of the whole Earth* would finally *do what was Right*, and would not suffer *Virtue* to *perish* equally with *Vice*. Under the *Old Testament*, *Moses*, being eminently what our *Saviour* in the *Text* calls *Poor in Spirit*, preferred the *Poverty* and *Affliction* of the *People of God*, before the *Riches and Honours* of *Pharaoh's Court*; and 'tis recorded of him, not in a way of *diminishing*, but of *extolling* his *Virtue*, that he *esteemed this Reproach* to be *greater Riches than the Treasures in Egypt*; for he had *respect unto the recompence of the Reward*. And when *Job*, in the time of his greatest *Distress*, persisted in his *Reliance upon God*; (*though he say me, yet will I trust in him*;) 'twas not a *lower*, but a *higher pitch* of the *same virtue* in him, (because 'twas fixing it upon



## Of Poverty of Spirit.

277

a rational and consistent Ground,) to de-  
clare that he knew that his Redeemer lived,  
and that he should stand at the latter day  
upon the Earth. Under the New Testa-  
ment, God himself has, in a more express  
and explicit manner, declared himself to  
be, in the future and eternal state, a Re-  
warder of them that diligently seek him;  
not thereby to diminish, but to increase  
That Virtue, the Practice of which is  
rationally and consistently supported by so  
divine and glorious an Expectation. Ac-  
cordingly, the Apostle St Paul declares  
concerning himself, that he pressed toward  
the Mark, for the prize of the high calling  
of God in Christ Jesus. And he perpe-  
tually exhorts all other Christians; so to  
run, that they may obtain an incorruptible  
Crown; so to behave themselves, as they  
who are continually looking for That Blef-  
sed Hope and the glorious Appearance of  
the Great God and our Saviour Jesus  
Christ; laying hold upon the Hope set be-  
fore them; even the Hope which is laid  
up for them in Heaven; looking not at the  
things which are temporal, but at the  
things which are eternal; and considering

S E R M.

XII.

Phil. iii.

1 Cor. ix.

Tit. ii. 13.

Heb. vi.

Col. i. 5.

2 Cor. iv.

18.

S E R M. that their *light affliction which is but for*  
 XII. *a moment, worketh for them a far more*  
 exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.

Our Saviour also himself, when his Disciples asked him, saying, *Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?* scrupled not to reply, *Matt. xix. 28, Verily I say unto you,—when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* And elsewhere, in his exhortations

Mat. v. 12. to the same Disciples; *When men shall revile you, says he, and persecute you; rejoice, and be exceeding glad; For great is your Reward in Heaven.* Nay, which is more remarkable than all these; concerning our Lord's own practice, the Scripture declares, that *for the Joy which was set before him, he endured the Cross, despised the Shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.* To imagine therefore, as Some *Enthusiastick* Writers, and Others through a *vain and conceited affectation* have done; that the perfection of Virtue wholly excludes Self-love, and all Regards to any recompence of Reward;

ward; is taking upon themselves to re-<sup>S E R M.</sup>  
proach the *Greatest* and most eminently <sup>XII.</sup>  
*Virtuous* men, that have lived in All  
*Nations* and in All *Ages*; 'tis reproaching  
the *Apostles* of our Lord; 'tis reproaching  
our *Saviour* in his own Practice; 'tis re-  
proaching *God himself*, and the *Nature of*  
*things* which he has made; who hath  
*prepared for*, and *expressly promised to*,  
them that love and obey him, such good  
*things* as pass man's Understanding, which  
*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither*  
*hath it entered into the heart of man,*  
*to conceive.* Through the expectation  
of which spiritual and eternal Happi-  
ness, whoever is prevailed upon to live  
virtuously, has a Right to apply to him-  
self upon account of Religion in ge-  
neral, what our Saviour in the Text says  
in particular of those who are poor in  
Spirit; *Blessed are they, for theirs is the*  
*Kingdom of Heaven.*

15

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253

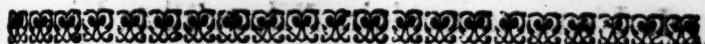
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# SERMON XIII.

Of the Virtue of Charity.



I COR. xiii. 3.

*And though I bestow all my goods  
to feed the poor, and though I  
give my Body to be burned, and  
have not Charity, it profiteth me  
nothing.*



IN the following Discourse SERM.  
upon these Words, I shall <sup>1<sup>st</sup></sup> XIII.  
explain *What* That Virtue is,  
which the Apostle here calls  
*Charity*; and *What* its oppo-  
site *Vice*, 2<sup>dly</sup>, I shall consider the ex-  
cellent

S E R M. cellent *Effect*, which the general Practice  
 XIII. of this Virtue would have in the World;  
 and the great *Stress* which our Saviour  
 and his Apostles accordingly do constantly  
 lay upon it, as being the *Principal*  
*Part* and the *main End* of Religion.  
 3dly, I shall take Notice of the incredible  
*Mischiefs* arising to Mankind, from the  
*Want* of this Great Virtue. And *Lastly*,  
 I shall draw some useful *Inferences* from  
 the whole.

I. I AM to explain *What* That Virtue  
 is, which the Apostle here calls *Charity*;  
 and *What* its opposite *Vice*. And here it  
 is evident at first sight to every attentive  
 person, that the word in This place can-  
 not possibly mean, what in common  
 Speech it is now generally used to signi-  
 fy, *Alms* or *Charity to the Poor*. For it  
 is expressly *distinguished* from That, in  
 the very words of the Text itself: *Though*  
*I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and*  
*have not Charity, it profiteth me Nothing.*  
*Charity* therefore must needs here signify  
 some Virtue or good Habit, of a *more ge-*  
*neral* and extensive Nature. And indeed the  
 Apostle himself distinctly defines it, in the  
 verses

## Of the Virtue of Charity.

283

verses following my Text; *Charity*, says S E R M.  
*he, suffereth long, and is kind; envieth* XIII.  
*not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up;*  
*doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not*  
*her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no*  
*Evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoic-*  
*eth in the Truth; beareth all things, endu-*  
*reth all things; and so on, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7.*  
From this description 'tis evident, that by  
the word *Charity* in the Text, is expressed  
That *Christian Temper and Disposition*,  
That *Love and Good-Will towards Man-*  
*kind*, which is the Great Foundation of  
All virtues; and concerning which the  
same Apostle elsewhere tells us, that the  
End of the Commandment is *Charity*.  
Without this *Good and Christian Temper*  
of Mind, no single Action is valuable in  
the Sight of God: *Though I bestow all my*  
*Goods to feed the Poor, and have not Cha-*  
*rity, it profiteth me nothing: That is,*  
*Almsgiving*, or the Act of any other Vir-  
tue, if it proceeds only from some acci-  
dental Cause, and springs not from a right  
Principle; if it be accompanied with,  
and made subservient to, Designs of Pride  
and Ambition, of imperiousness and do-  
minion,

SERMON. minion, of Party, Faction and worldly  
 XIII. Power in matters of Religion; 'tis of No  
 Esteem in the Sight of God. Where  
*Love and Goodness and Christian Temper,*  
 are not the *Governing Principle*; nothing  
 is acceptable, no not even Almsgiving it-  
 self. But where *Love and universal Cha-*  
*rity,* (even *That Love* which St Paul de-  
 clares to be *the fulfilling of the Whole*  
*Law*; Where *This*) is the *Root*; *There* in-  
 deed, one of its *Fairest Branches*, one of  
 the goodliest *Instances and Effects* of it in  
*particular*, is *Liberality towards our Poor*  
*Brethren*. From whence it has come to  
 pass, that *Charity*, which properly signi-  
 fies *universal Love and Good-Will*, has by  
 frequent use been confined, to the *parti-*  
*cular* sense of *Charity to the Poor*. And  
 Great indeed are the Promises which are  
 made in Scripture, to this *single Branch*  
 of *Charity, in particular*: It is stiled by  
 our Saviour, St Luke xvi. 9. a *Making to*  
*ourselves Friends of the Mammon of Un-*  
*righteousness, that when we fail, they may*  
*receive us into everlasting Habitations.*  
 Upon which *Application* of the Parable of  
 the Unjust Steward, I cannot but observe  
 by



by the way, that his remitting to his Lord's Debtors a part of their Debt, ought not to be understood (as it usually is) to have been a defrauding of his Lord; For 'tis only upon his *former* behaviour, that the Text charges him with *Injustice*; But in this *last* Action, he seems to be represented as obliging his Lord's Debtors out of what *He himself* was still to account for: For which reason, our Saviour compares *his* securing to himself by a timely Bounty the Friendship of those Debtors, (he compares it) to *Our* laying up for ourselves, by works of Charity and Beneficence here on *Earth*, a treasure hereafter in the *Heavens*. Very Great things therefore, I say, are indeed spoken in Scripture, concerning this *particular* Virtue of *Liberality to the Poor*. But 'tis evident This is *not* what is meant by the word *Charity* in the Text, because 'tis expressly distinguished in the words themselves, from *bestowing all our Goods to feed the Poor*. And indeed it deserves to be particularly taken notice of, that not only in *This* Text, but in all *Other* places also, without exception, through the whole

S.E.R.M.  
XIII.  
~

New

SERM. *New Testament*; the word *Charity* never  
 XIII. once signifies the *giving of Alms*, but al-  
 ways That *Universal Love*, That *Christian*  
*Temper* and *Good-will towards All men*,  
 of which *Alms-giving to the Poor* is but  
 one single Branch, or one particular Ef-  
 fect. And *Many other* Instances there  
 are, wherein the Signification of words in  
 common Use being much changed by cu-  
 stom and course of Time, considerable  
 Errours and Mistakes are thence apt to  
 arise among such as read the Scriptures  
 carelessly and without Attention: Which  
 Errours can no otherwise be prevented,  
 but by taking care to observe, not the bare  
*Sound of single Words*, but the connexion  
 and sense and meaning of the *whole Dis-*  
*course*. To Him who thus reads and con-  
 siders with Attention, 'tis manifest that the  
*Charity*, which the Apostle here supposes  
 a Person may be wholly void of, tho' he  
*bestows all his goods to feed the Poor*; and  
 which he at large describes, in the follow-  
 ing part of this Chapter; 'tis manifest,  
 I say, that the *Charity* here spoken of, is  
 That *Christian Temper*, That *universal*  
*Love* and *Benignity of Mind*, which, in  
 oppo-

## *Of the Virtue of Charity.*

287

opposition to all worldly Party and Faction, S E R M.  
to all Hatred, Contentiousness and Animo- XIII.  
sity, imperiousness and desire of imposing  
upon each other, teaches men with meek-  
ness and patience, with gentleness and kind-  
ness, in imitation of Christ, to be solli-  
citous for nothing else, to be earnestly  
bent upon no other Design, comparatively  
speaking; but that of promoting univer-  
sally the *Knowledge of Truth*, and the  
*Practice of Righteousness*, for the general  
Benefit of Mankind.

THE *Contrary* to which Virtue of uni-  
versal Love and Charity, or the proper Vice  
of *Uncharitableness*, is That Spirit of Vio-  
lence and Arbitrariness, That Love of impe-  
riousness and Dominion, That presumptuous  
Hating and ill-treating of each other, upon  
account of unavoidable Differences in opi-  
nion; things not essential to religion;  
which our Saviour so earnestly warns us  
against, *St. Matt. vii. 1. Judge not, that  
ye be not judged; For with what judgment  
ye judge, ye shall be judged:-----And why  
beholdest thou the Mote that is in thy Bro-  
ther's Eye, but considerest not the Beam that  
is in thine own Eye?* *St. James* in like  
manner,

SER M. manner, *ch. iv. 12. There is one law-giver,*

**XIII.** *who is able to save and to destroy; Who art thou, that judgest another? And St. Paul, Rom. xiv. 4. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. And, Why dost thou judge thy Brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy Brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, ver. 10. Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth, ver. 3. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, (that is, is not Forms, and Ceremonies,) but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, ver. 17. From the two last-cited Verses 'tis evident, that this Duty of Charity, or of not judging and censuring each other, is not to be understood as having place with regard to Instances of plain wickedness; but with respect either to such matters of Speculation, as are not in mens own Power; or to things indifferent in Practice, which are not of moral Obligation. For, all notorious wickednesses; such as are Atheism, and Prophaneness; Oppression, Injustice and Fraud, Rioting, and Debau-*



Debauchery ; are *Sins* which (as the Apostle expresses it) go before unto Judgment : S E R M.  
XIII.

They are such things, for which we may and ought to judge ill of men, and to rebuke them sharply and severely for them.

But the proper Objects about which the Virtue of *Charity* is to be employed, are Things *indifferent*, concerning which God has given no plain Commandment ; or such Matters of *Opinion*, wherein sincere men may with equal regard to Truth and Virtue, follow their different judgments and conscience. Judging and censuring each other about things of *This* nature, is what the Scripture declares to be altogether *Unchristian*. And the experience of all corrupt Ages has abundantly shown, that mens presumptuous reproaching each other upon account of such things as These ; has been the great Cause of all the Schisms and Divisions, of all the contentions and animosities, which have over-run and in great measure destroyed the Christian world. For the Sins of Schism and Division among Christians, are of a much larger extent, and will be charged to the Account of *More* and of *other kind*

S E R M. of persons, than careless and presumptuous  
 XIII. men are apt to imagine. All imperious-  
 ness and affectation of dominion, which  
 St Peter calls *Lording it over the Heritage of God*; all peevishness and unreasonable-  
 ness; all contentiousness, fierceness, and  
 animosity of Spirit; all ill Usage of men,  
 and casting names of Reproach upon each  
 other, on account of Matters either of  
*indifferent Practise* or of *sincere Opinion*;  
 all *Parties and Factions* in Religion, or  
*Incroachments* upon That Christian (and  
 virtuous, not licentious) *Liberty* where-  
 with our Lord has made his Disciples free,  
*Gal. v. 1*: All these things are justly  
 chargeable, with being each in their  
 proportion, the Causes and sad occasi-  
 ons of irreconcilable Divisions among  
 Christians. From whence it plainly  
 appears, that not only *particular Per-  
 sons*, but even the greatest *Bodies of men*,  
 may be guilty of That Vice, which the  
 Apostle in the Text calls *not having Cha-  
 rity*, or not having That Christian Tem-  
 per and universal Love, without which  
 all other even the *greatest* appearances of  
 Goodness will *profit men nothing*. The  
 Church

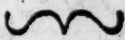
Church of *Rome*, for Example, is a stupendous Instance of This: who, excluding (as much as in them lies) from Christian Communion and from the Hopes of Salvation, all men who cannot embrace the Doctrines of Popes and Councils and other humane Inventions, as of like necessity with the Gospel itself; do, by the Greatest Schism that ever was in the World, cut in sunder (or rather cut themselves off from) That Spouse or Body or Universal Church of Christ, which can possibly be but One, One Temple built upon the *Foundation*, and upon the *Doctrine*, of Christ and his Apostles only; and, though consisting of different *parts*, varying from each other in external Forms, as Members of the same living Body differ in Shape from each other; yet all united in one Holy Band of *Righteousness* and *Charity*.

II. HAVING thus at large explained *What* That Virtue is, which the Apostle in the Text calls *Charity*, and *what* its opposite *Vice*; I proceed in the 2d place to consider the excellent *Effect*, which the general Practise of this Virtue would

S E R M. have in the World; and the great *Stress*

XIII. which our Saviour and his Apostles accordingly do constantly lay upon it, as being the *Principal Part* and the *main End* of Religion. That nothing is so much wanting, in order to set the World right, as a *charitable Spirit* and *Christian Temper* among those who call themselves Christians, is evident to All men. That the Gospel *may still* be propagated; nay, that it may *best* and most *effectually*; nay, that indeed it *can only* be propagated, by the Same means with which our Saviour *began* to propagate it; by *strength* of Reason and *clearness* of Evidence, by good *Example* of *Virtue* and *Righteousness* in *Practice*, joined with *Love* and true *Charity* towards the Persons of All men; is demonstrable from the Nature of *Things* and of *Men*. The *Harvest* of persons capable of receiving the Truth, when laid before them plainly and distinctly in the Spirit of Meekness and Charity, is very great: The *Labourers* only, saith our Saviour, are too few; *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he will send forth Labourers into his Harvest.* Did

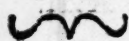


Christians universally labour, after This S E R M.  
manner; the *Effect* could not but be, that XIII.  
the *Knowledge of the Lord* would fill the   
*Earth, as the Waters cover the Sea*: The

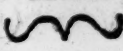
Vine which God's right hand has planted,  
would *spread out her Branches unto the*  
*Sea, and her Boughs unto the River*: Not  
by any *One Party* of Christians swallow-  
ing up and destroying all the rest; but by  
each of them severally taking away their  
uncharitable Distinctions, removing their  
needless Particularities, and the unchri-  
stian Bars and Confinements set up by hu-  
mane invention; and uniting upon the  
One immoveable Foot, of the everlasting  
Gospel of Truth and Charity. Marvel-  
lous are the Promises of Blessings and  
Happiness, which in the Prophetick part  
of Scripture are made to the Church of  
God, when it shall *in This manner* prevail  
upon the Earth. *With righteousness shall*  
*he judge the poor, and reprove with equity*  
*for the Meek of the Earth; and he shall*  
*smite the Earth with the rod of his mouth,*  
*and with the breath of his lips, shall he*  
*slay the wicked: And righteousness shall be*  
*the girdle of his loyns, and faithfulness the*

SERM.

XIII.



*girdle of his reins: The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the Kid; and the Calf and the young Lion and the fatling together, and a little Child shall lead them:-----They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy Mountain; for the Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea:-----And he shall set up an Ensign for the Nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the Earth, Isai. xi. 4, &c. And in the Revelation of St John, the like Prophecies are again repeated, ch. xiv. 6; xi. 15: I saw an Angel having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto Them that dwell on the Earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people:-----And there were great Voices in Heaven, saying; The Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. Whether these and the like Prophecies shall yet finally have a literal Accomplishment, by an universal Prevalency of the Gospel of Peace on Earth; or whether*

ther they shall have their full and literal SERM.  
 completion, *only* in That *New Heaven* XIII.  
*and New Earth, wherein Righteousness* is   
 to dwell for ever; is still a Secret in the  
 Breast of Providence, which we ought not  
 to be over-confident in explaining. But  
 in *This* we cannot err; in exhorting in  
 the mean time all Christians continually,  
 to put on that Spirit of Christ, That Spi-  
 rit of Meekness and true Humility, That  
 Spirit of Love and universal Charity,  
 That Christian *Temper* and disposition of  
 Mind; which *alone* can promote the  
 Kingdom of God, and His righteousness:  
 Which, *so far* as 'tis at any time practised,  
 causes Christianity to become in Fact *a*  
*Light shining before men*, inviting them  
*to glorify our Father which is in Heaven:*  
 And which, if it was the *Universal* Be-  
 haviour of Christians, would certainly  
 cause the Gospel *universally* to prevail,  
 by means of that irresistible Excellency  
 and Beauty in which it would appear,  
 when All Contentions and Animosities,  
 all unreasonable *Prejudices* against each  
 other, all Parties and Factions and Names  
 of Reproach among Christians upon ac-

S E R M. count of differences in opinion, were laid  
 XIII. aside; and every man, making the Gospel alone the Rule of his *own* Actions, and having no Desire to have *dominion* over the Consciences of his Brethren, but all of them instructing and exhorting each other (according to the respective *Order* and Nature of their several *stations* and *capacities*;) with mutual Love and Forbearance, as Fellow-servants of one common Lord by whom they must All at last be judged; bent their Whole Endeavours towards *One only* uniform End, the promoting amongst men the *Knowledge of Truth* and the *Practice of Right*. Were This (I say) the *General* Behaviour of Christians, according to the Obligations of their most Holy Profession; it could not fail but the Gospel would be embraced universally over all the Earth. And for This reason it seems to be, that our Saviour in all his Discourses constantly lays so peculiar a *Stress* upon this Duty of *Love and Charity and Good-will towards Men*; as if it was the *Principal Part* and *Great Design* of Religion; and as if he had always a particular View to that



that general Corruption and Destruction S E R M.  
of true Christianity, which he foresaw XIII.  
would for so many Ages together be the  
consequence of *Want of Christian Temper*  
among those who called themselves the  
*Christian World*. *A New Commandment*,  
says he, *I give unto you, that ye love one*  
*another*, Joh. xiii. 34. *A New Command-*  
*ment*; Not that it was not *Always* mens  
Duty in general; but that it was to be,  
in a *New and distinguishing manner*, the  
Character and Badge of Christians; the  
Effect and the Support, the Life and Es-  
sence of true Christianity. The *Jews*  
hated the *Samaritans*, and the *Samari-*  
*tans* hated the *Jews*; and by This means  
their Schism was kept up for ever. But  
*Christians*, were to love their Brethren;  
to love also those that differed from them;  
nay, to show all gentleness even towards  
those that most fiercely opposed them;  
that, by this godlike behaviour, they  
might by degrees gain and win all men  
over to the acknowledgement of the  
Truth. It was to be their distinguishing  
Character, *Joh. xiii. 35*; *By this shall all*  
*men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye*  
*have*

S E R M. *have Love one to another.* As imperiousness, and affectation of dominion, and persecution, is essentially the Spirit of *Antichrist*; so the *Christian* Spirit and Temper, is Meekness, Charity, Forbearance and Love. The *True* Disciples of Christ, are to be distinguished from false prophets, from wolves in sheep's clothing; not by mens crying, *Lord, Lord*; not by their fierceness for what *They* call the Temple of God, and which perhaps is nothing but some Humane Invention: But *by their Fruits*, says our Lord, *ye shall know them.* By their *Fruits*; that is, by those *Christian* virtues, by those Good works, which the Scripture elsewhere stiles the *Fruits of the Spirit*. Our Saviour *himself*, desired to be judged of, by the *Goodness* as well as by the *Greatness* of his Works: And therefore, in his parable of a *Kingdom divided against itself*, the Reason he gives for asserting the unpardonableness of mens ascribing his mighty works to the assistance of the *Evil One*, is the *Goodness* and *Beneficence* of the Works. In another

ther place, *comparing together the Great* S E R M.  
 and most important Duties of Religion; XIII.  
 next to the Love of God, he makes Cha-  
 rity towards Men, the Grand Design of  
 Religion: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy  
 God with all thy Heart; This, saith he,  
 is the first and great Commandment; And  
 the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love  
 thy Neighbour as thyself.* The Apostle  
 St John, after his Master's example, lays  
 the same stress upon this excellent Virtue;  
 declaring, that without this Love towards  
 Men, there can be no such thing as a  
 sincere Love towards God; 1 Job. iv. 20,  
*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his  
 Brother, he is a Liar; For --- This com-  
 mandment have we from Him, that he who  
 loveth God, love his Brother also.* His  
 meaning is; All pretences of Love to-  
 wards God, which produce not true Vir-  
 tue, and particularly Love and Charity  
 towards our Brethren; are nothing more  
 than mere *Enthusiasm*. Again: he tells  
 us, That without this universal Charity,  
 no pretended zeal for Religion can be sin-  
 cere; ch. ii. 10, *He that loveth his Bro-  
 ther, abideth in the Light; --- but he that  
 hateth*

**SERM.** *hateth his Brother, is in darkness, and*  
**XIII.** *walketh in darkness; that is, he is alto-*  
 together ignorant of the true Nature and Spirit of Christianity. Lastly; That the want of this Virtue, and the prevalency of the contrary imperious Spirit, is one principal Mark and Character of Antichrist; ch. iii. 10, *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil; whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his Brother; For this is the Message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.* St Peter in like manner, 1 Pet. iv. 8, *Above all things, saith he, have fervent Charity among yourselves; for Charity shall cover the Multitude of Sins:* The Sense is; not that any one particular Virtue, such as that which we Now call *Charity to the Poor*, shall excuse men from the practise of other Duties, or in the practise of any Vices or Immoralities; but that That general Christian Temper and good Spirit of Love and sincere Desire of doing good to all men, which he here calls *having fervent Charity among yourselves*, shall cover Many Errors,



## *Of the Virtue of Charity.*

301

Errors, many *such* imperfections and fail-  
ings, as a truly good Christian, who has  
this excellent root of Virtue in him, can  
be supposed to be guilty of. The very  
same Notion is likewise perpetually in-  
culcated by St Paul; Col. iii. 14, *Above  
all these things put on Charity, which is  
the Bond of Perfection*: The word which  
we here render *Charity*, is in *This*, as in  
all other places, *Αγάπη* Love, Universal  
Love towards Mankind. Again, 1 Tim. i.  
4, 5, *Neither give heed, says he, to Fables  
and endless Genealogies*, (that is, to matters  
of mere *Form*, Order of *Successions*, and  
the like, which the *Jews* were apt to lay  
so great Stress upon;) But *The End of  
the Commandment*, (the Great Design of  
the *Christian Law*,) *is Charity*. Last-  
ly, and to conclude: In That Noble Dis-  
course, whereof my Text is a part, he  
thus, eloquently and affectionately, incul-  
cates the same Doctrine. *Though I speak,*  
*says he, with the Tongues of Men and of*  
*Angels, and have not Charity; I am be-*  
*come as sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cym-*  
*bal. And though I have the gift of Pro-*  
*phesy, and understand all mysteries, and*  
*all*

S E R M.  
XIII.  
~

SERM. *all Knowledge; and though I have all*  
 XIII. *Faith, so that I could remove Mountains;*  
 ~~~~~ *and have no Charity; I am nothing. And*  
though I bestow all my Goods to feed the
Poor, and though I give my Body to be
burned, and have not Charity; it profiteth
me nothing. In St Paul's opinion there-
fore; though a man could preach like an
Angel, and had the Knowledge of an in-
spired Prophet; Though he had the Faith
of an Apostle, and the Zeal of a Martyr,
and gave away in Alms to the Poor, even
his whole Substance: yet, if his Religion
consisted in Party and Faction, and pro-
moted uncharitableness, imperiousness, and
ill-treatment of Other men; even not-
withstanding all those Great Excellencies,
it would profit him nothing. The Rea-
son of this lofty assertion, follows in the
8th verse: For, all other excellent Gifts,
and even Virtues themselves, are only of
temporary continuance; But Charity Alone,
never faileth: Whether there be Prophe-
cies, they shall fail; whether there be
Tongues, they shall cease; whether there be
Knowledge, it shall vanish away: Faith
shall be swallowed up in Vision, and Hope
shall

Of the Virtue of Charity.

303

shall terminate upon *Injoyment*; But the S E R M.
Love of God and of our Brethren, shall, XIII.
when *This world* is *passed away*, continue
and increase *for ever*. That every *man*,
and every *Number of men*, who call them-
selves *Christians*, may seriously consider
this important *Truth*; God of his infi-
nite *Mercy* grant, &c.



S E R M O N

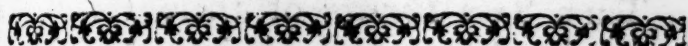
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ДОМЯЗ



SERMON XIV.

Of the Virtue of Charity.



I COR. xiii. 3.

*And though I bestow all my goods
to feed the poor, and though I
give my Body to be burned, and
have not Charity, it profiteth me
nothing.*



IN discoursing upon these SERM.
words of the Apostle, I pro- XIV.
posed 1st, To explain *What*
That Virtue is, which he
here calls *Charity*; and *What*

its opposite *Vice* is: 2^{dly}, To consider
VOL. III. X the

SERM. the excellent *Effect*, which the general

XIV. Practice of this Virtue would have in the World; and the great *Stress* which our Saviour and his Apostles accordingly do constantly lay upon it, as being the *Principal Part* and the *Main End* of Religion: 3dly, To take Notice of the incredible *Mischiefs* arising to Mankind, from the *Want* of the Practice of this Great Virtue: And *lastly*, To draw some useful *Inferences* from the Whole.

THE *Two Former* of these Heads, I have already gone through: And have shown; *That* the word *Charity* here, does not signify the *particular Virtue* of giving *Alms* to the Poor; For 'tis expressly distinguished from *That*, in the very words of the Text itself; But, that it is here made use of to express a more *general* and extensive Virtue, even *That Christian Temper and Disposition*, *That general Love and Good-Will towards Mankind*, which is the Great Foundation of *All Virtues* and good Habits; teaching men with Meekness and Patience, with Tenderness and Affection, with Gentleness and Kindness, after the Example of Christ, to labour and be solicitous

Of the Virtue of Charity.

307

for Nothing else, comparatively speaking, S E R M.
than the promoting universally the Know- XIV.
ledge of *Truth* and the *Practice of Righte-*
ousness in the World. 

That the contrary *Vice* therefore, or
the proper *Sin* of *Uncharitableness*, is
That Spirit of Violence and Imposition,
which reigns too much amongst Man-
kind; That Love of Imperiousness and
Dominion, That presumptuous Hating
and ill-treatment of each other, which
prevails so much in the World, upon ac-
count of Matters either of *indifferent*
Practice or of *sincere Opinion*.

That the *Effect*, which the *General*
Practice of the *Charity* or *Christian Tem-*
per here recommended by the Apostle,
would produce in the World, could not
fail to be *The universal Spreading of the*
Gospel of Truth and Peace, over all the
Nations of the Earth.

AND, *That* for *This reason* it is, that
our Saviour and his Apostles accordingly
do constantly lay so *Great and Singular a*
Stress upon *This Virtue*, as being the
Principal Part, and the *main End* of Re-
ligion.

VOL. III.

X 2

III. I PRO-

SERM. III. I PROCEED now, in the *Third*
XIV. place, to consider distinctly the incredible
Mischiefs arising to Mankind, from the
Want of the practice of this excellent
Virtue. And here opens itself to our
View, one of the most melancholy Scenes,
that ever was beheld upon the face of the
Earth. Our Blessed Saviour came to teach
Mankind a Doctrine of Truth and Pu-
rity, of Simplicity and Plainness; A Do-
ctrine of Religion, which All men might
easily understand, and which 'tis infinite-
ly every man's Interest to practise; A Do-
ctrine, the Whole of which, as he him-
self assures us, is summed up in Two par-
ticulars, the Love of God, and of our
Neighbour; the Worship of the One
True God, the Father and Lord of all
things, thro' the One True Mediator
whom he himself has appointed, in op-
position to every kind of Idolatry; and
a constant sincere endeavour of doing
Good to all men, in opposition to every
degree of Unrighteousness, Iniquity and
Uncharitableness. To the Happiness of
Mankind even in *This Life*, 'tis manifest
These are the Means which would con-
tribute

Of the Virtue of Charity.

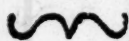
309

SERM.
XIV.

tribute incomparably more, than any other Methods whatsoever. But the *principal* View wherewith our Lord gave these Commands to his Followers, was that they might practise them in expectation of God's having appointed a day, wherein he would judge the World in righteousness by his Son Jesus Christ; and reward every man finally, in the *future and eternal* State, according to their Works. And because 'twas thus principally with regard to the *Life to come*, that our Lord gave all his Commandments; therefore with great earnestness he continually cautioned his Disciples, that as he had declared his *own Kingdom* was not to be of This World, so *They* should continually take strict heed *after him*, never to make their *preaching of His religion* a pretense for aspiring after *temporal Authority*. In a Parable framed on purpose, he commands his Followers not to take upon them to pull up the *Tares*, lest they root up also the *Wheat* with them. The meaning of which is not, that magistrates are not to cut off *Malefactors*; but that in matters merely *religious*, Christi-

SERM.

XIV.



ans are not to presume to judge the Con-
 sciences of each other, before the day of
 the Lord cometh. *The Princes of the Gen-
 tiles, says he, exercise Dominion over
 them, and they that are Great, exercise
 Authority upon them: But it shall not be
 so among You; but whosoever will be great
 among you, let him be your Minister; and
 whosoever will be chief among you, let him
 be your Servant; Even as the Son of Man
 came not to be ministred unto, but to mini-
 er, and to give his Life a Ransom for Ma-
 ny; Matt. xx. 25. So long, and so far, as
 Christianity was planted according to This
 Standard of its Great Author; in plain-
 ness and Simplicity of uncorrupt Do-
 ctrine; and in meekness, and Humility,
 Love and Charity, in Practice: When*

Acts ii. 42, Christians continued stedfastly in the Apo-
 46. stles doctrine and fellowship, and in break-
 ing of Bread and in Prayers;---continu-
 ing daily with one accord in the Temple,---
 eating their Meat with gladness and single-
 ness of Heart, praising God, and having
 favour with all the people; When the Mul-
 titude of them that believed, were of one
 Heart, and of One Soul; and great Grace

was

Of the Virtue of Charity.

311

was upon them *All*; Acts iv. 32, 33. SERM.
XIV.
Then did their Light shine forth indeed before men, and cause them to praise and glorify the God of Heaven: Then were they in reality and indeed, acceptable to God, and approved of Men: Then was the Gospel truly and conspicuously, like a City upon an Hill, a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of God's people Israel: It was the Praise and Wonder of those who beheld its Blessed Effects, and might have been the Joy of the whole Earth. Had Christians continued, as St Paul beseeched them, Eph. iv. 1. to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they were called; with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace: Had they considered the Argument he urges, that there could be but One Body and One Spirit, even as they were called in One Hope of their Calling; One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of all, who is Above All: Had they continued, (according to the exhortation and inference he draws from this Argument;) to

ver. 6.

X 4

Speak

S E R M. *Speak the Truth in Love, that they might*
 XIV. *grow up into Him in all things, who is the*
 ~~~~~  
 ver. 15. *Head, even Christ; From whom the whole*  
*Body fitly joined together, and compacted*  
*by that which every Joint supplieth, ac-*  
*ording to the effectual working in the mea-*  
*sure of every part, maketh increase of the*  
*Body unto the edifying of itself in Love:*  
*The Church of God, established upon*  
*This Foundation of the Apostles and Pro-*  
*phets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief*  
*corner-stone; might in its Whole Build-*  
*ing fitly framed together, have grown*  
*up into One Holy Temple in the Lord.*

B U T an Enemy soon sowed Tares among  
 this Wheat, and contentious men very  
 early began to build Hay and Stubble up-  
 on the Foundation of Christ. Not content  
 with the Simplicity and Plainness of the  
 Gospel, which could possibly furnish no  
 Materials for Strife and Contention, vain  
 men soon began to mix their own uncer-  
 tain Opinions with the Doctrine of Christ;  
 and had no other way to give them  
 Weight and Authority, but by indeavour-  
 ing to force them upon the Faith of O-  
 thers. And out of This Bramble, as Jo-  
 tham

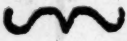


## Of the Virtue of Charity.

313

*tham* foretold the men of *Shechem*, *Judg.* SERM.  
XIV. ix. 15; out of this *Bramble* hath a *Fire* proceeded, which hath devoured the *Cedars of Lebanon*: Or, as the Prophet *Ezekiel* expresses himself concerning the Vine of *Israel*; ch. xix. 14, *A Fire is gone out of a Rod of her Branches, which hath devoured her Fruit.* For, from a desire of being *Many Masters*; from a Desire of forcing mutually our *own* Opinions upon Others, instead of exhorting them to study and obey the Gospel of *Christ*; have arisen Strifes and Contentions, Hatred and Uncharitableness, Schisms and Divisions without End. *From whence*, Ch. iv. 1. says *St James*, *come Wars and Fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your Lusts that war in your Members?* From a zeal for the Religion and for the Commandments of *Christ*, from a Concern for the promoting of Truth, Righteousness and Charity, 'tis evident in the nature of things, and in the experience of All Ages, that Wars and Fightings, Hatred and Animosities, never have, nor can proceed. *These* precious Fruits have always sprung from That Root of Bitterness,

SER M. terness, a zeal for the Doctrines and Com-

XIV. mandments of *Men*, a Striving for *tem-*  
poral Power and Dominion. At the first

*Beginning* of the *working of the Mystery of Iniquity*, the *Builders of Hay and Stubble upon the foundation of Christ* went no farther than to *Censoriousness and Uncharitableness* towards their Brethren. Against whom, St Paul argues, *Rom. xiv. 10, Why dost thou judge thy Brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy Brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.* But in process of time; as Water, at a further Distance from the Fountain, divides itself continually into more streams, and becomes less pure, and more mixt, and more different from the Nature of the Fountain itself; so, when men had once departed from the Simplicity and Purity of the *Doctrine*, and from the Charitableness and Goodness of the *Spirit of Christ*, their Hatred and Animosities against each other increased continually, till they literally fulfilled That remarkable Prophecy of our Saviour, in which is contained a most Severe Reproof of those Corrupters of the Gospel of Truth

## Of the Virtue of Charity.

315

Truth and Charity, who he foresaw would arise in following Ages; St Luk. xii. 49, SERM.  
XIV.

*I am come to send Fire on the Earth; And Matt. x. 34, Think not that I am come to send Peace on Earth; I came not to send Peace, but a Sword: For I am come to set a man at variance against his Father, and the daughter against her Mother; ----and a man's Foes shall be they of his own Household.* Nay, even that description which he gives of the Persecution which the *Jews* should bring upon his Disciples, *Joh. xvi. 2, The Time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God Service; even This, in Time, came to be fulfilled by one Christian, (so they still called themselves;) it was fulfilled, I say, by one Christian upon another. Till at last, when the Measure of iniquity was become full, and the Power of Popery was compleatly seated and established in the Temple of God; then, in like manner as our Lord declared concerning That generation of the *Jews* in which He himself lived, that the Blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the World,-----from the Blood of righteous*

S E R M. *teous Abel* even unto That day, should be

XIV. *required of That Generation*; so likewise,

and for the very same Reason, concerning That Body of men, which calls itself the *Christian* and the *Catholick Church*, does the Scripture wonderfully foretell,

Rev. xviii. *that in Her should be found the Blood of Prophets and of Saints, and of all that are slain upon the Earth.* Since the Re-

24-

formation, and in Places where it has happily prevailed, this wicked and unchristian Spirit has in very great measure abated: But still, ('tis to be feared,) even among too many *Protestants themselves*, Zeal for particular Forms and Ceremonies, more than for Virtue and Religion itself; A Concern for the distinguishing Doctrines of Parties, more than for the Commandments of our Common Lord; A Desire of compelling each Other's Faith, more than of reforming our Own Manners; continues to hinder the growth of Christian Charity, and, like the Worm at the Root of *Jonah's Gourd*, to eat out the Vitals of true Religion. We read every day in *St John*, that *whosoever doth not Righteousness, is not of God, neither*  
be



*Of the Virtue of Charity.*

317

he that loveth not his Brother; and that S E R M.  
if any man say, I love God, and hateth XIV.  
his Brother, he is a Liar: And yet we  
are still so weak, as frequently to reverse  
the Text, and think we can no way so  
zealously show forth our *Love* towards  
God, as by *Hatred* and *ill treatment* of  
our *Brethren*. Our Lord severely rebu-  
ked his Disciples, telling them *they knew*  
*not what Spirit they were of*, when they  
would have called for Fire from Heaven  
upon the *Samaritans*: And yet men are  
still so foolish, as to be continually de-  
sirous of using Methods of Force, even  
*Christians* against *each other*. The *imme-*  
*diat* and *necessary Effects* of This Un-  
charitableness and Bitterness of Spirit, is,  
that the true Fruits of Virtue and Righ-  
teousness and real Goodness are (compa-  
ratively speaking) neglected and lightly  
esteemed; that Superstition and Bigotry  
and absurd Notions of Religion prevail  
among the *Weak*; and those who have  
*more discernment*, who have discernment  
enough to *see*, and yet not enough to *see*  
*Through* these Absurdities, are tempted to  
Atheism, Scepticism, and Infidelity. All  
which

SERM. which things being observed by those who  
 XIV. are *without*; instead of being moved to  
 glorify our Father which is in Heaven, as  
 our Light shining before them ought to  
 cause them to do; they are on the con-  
 trary, by our Works of Darkness which  
 they behold, confirmed in their Unbelief;  
 and the Name of God is blasphemed among  
 the Gentiles, through Us, as it is written.  
 This is the Great Reproach to Christians,  
 and the Great Impediment to the Pro-  
 gress of Christianity. This is that which  
 makes the Pagan and Mahometan World  
 still superior in Number to the Christian;  
 and that even in the midst of the Light  
 of the Gospel itself, yet Infidelity prevails  
 beyond measure.

BUT 'tis an easy thing to see the ill  
 consequences of Uncharitableness, and to  
 complain of the Mischiefs that arise from  
 the Divisions among Christians. The  
 Difficulty is, and the more useful part is,  
 to find how to remedy them. Now 'tis  
 very evident there are but Two possible  
 Ways by which the Divisions among  
 Christians can have an End put to them.  
 The one is, what all parties of Men are  
 generally

generally very fond of, but which can S E R M.  
never possibly be accomplished; and if XIV.  
it could, 'twould be the Destruction of  
Christianity itself. The *other* is, what  
would very easily and effectually cure the  
Evil, but what All parties are always  
very unwilling to put in Practice. The  
Method of curing Divisions, which Every  
party of men are very fond of, is, that  
those of all *other opinions* would at a ven-  
ture unite in submitting to *Them*: The  
Effect of which, if it could be accom-  
plished, would be, not the Establishment  
of the Gospel of Christ, but of some  
Worldly Power and Dominion in the  
stead of it; as is more particularly noto-  
rious, in all Places where Popery has  
prevailed. But indeed *This* method of  
Union is altogether impossible to be ac-  
complished. For as every party of Chri-  
stians reproaches all *others*, with causing  
Schisms and Divisions by not coming  
into *Their* opinions; so the *others* reci-  
procally cast the same reproach upon  
*Them*, for not coming into *Theirs*; And  
thus the Fire of mutual Uncharitableness  
is blown up for ever, while Both sides  
are

S E R M. are perhaps equally, or perhaps unequal-  
 XIV. ly, in Fault. For the case is exactly the  
 same, in *Moral* matters, as in things *na-*  
*tural*. In Nature and Truth, *real Mo-*  
*tion* belongs only to That Body, which  
 changes the *Absolute Place* it was in; but  
*relative Motion*, or the parting of one bo-  
 dy from another, belongs equally to the  
*Body from which another is removed*, as  
 to *That which itself moves*. Thus like-  
 wise in *Morality*; the *Real Sin*, or *Guilt*,  
 of *causing Schisms and Divisions*, lies al-  
 ways at the door of Him who departs  
 from the *Truth*, and who lays the *Stress*  
 of Religion where Christ has not laid it:  
 But the *relative Schisms or Divisions them-*  
*selves*, by which Christians are parted  
 from each other, are always, by All Par-  
 ties equally, laid to the Charge of their  
 Adversaries; And it must not be expect-  
 ed, that they can ever be cured, by any  
*One Party* swallowing up *all the rest*.  
 The *Other* therefore, and the *Only True*  
 Method, of remedying Divisions; but  
 which All parties are generally very un-  
 willing to put in Practice is, that every  
 party of Christians, forbearing to insist  
 and



and to lay too much Weight on their own S E R M.  
distinguishing Doctrines or Inventions of XIV.  
Men, sincerely endeavour to unite upon  
the foundation of the Gospel itself, that  
is, the original undisputed Doctrines and  
Commandments of Christ; and in all other  
things, by mutual Charity and Forbear-  
ance, Tenderneſs and Goodwill, preſerve  
the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of  
Peace; according to St Paul's direction,  
*Rom. xiv. 3, Let not him that eateth, de-  
ſpiſe him that eateth not; and let not him  
which eateth not, judge him that eateth.*

IV. IT remains, in the *Laſt* place, that  
I draw ſome uſeful Inferences from what  
has been ſaid, and ſo conclude. And

1<sup>ſt</sup>, FROM what has been ſaid con-  
cerning the Nature of the *Virtue of Cha-  
rity*, and its *opposite Vice*; we may ſee  
clearly whence it comes to paſs, that  
St Paul in his Catalogue of great Wick-  
edneſſes, *Gal. v. 20*, among *uncleanneſſes*,  
*idolatry, murders, drunkenneſs and revel-  
ling*, reckons alſo *hatred, variance and  
ſtriſe, ſeditious* (or Schiſms,) *hereties and  
ſuch like*, as being *Works of the Fleſh*.  
Tis evident, *differing in judgment or opi-  
nion*

S E R M. nion, is not a work of the *Flesh*, but of  
 XIV. the *Understanding*. *Disapproving* the o-  
 pinions of those whom a man sincerely  
 thinks to be in the *wrong*, is not a work  
 of the *Flesh*, but the *necessary* Duty of a  
*Christian*. The Crimes therefore which  
 St Paul speaks of, are the presumptuous  
 affecting of worldly Power, and the cau-  
 sing of Strifes and uncharitable Divisions  
 among Christians, by laying the *Stress* of  
 Religion upon particular distinguishing  
 Doctrines and Practices, on which our  
 Saviour himself has laid *No Stress*. These  
 are *indeed*, Works of the *Flesh*: These  
 are destructive of That Love and *Charity*  
 and Christian Temper, which is so fun-  
 damental in Religion, that, whosoever  
 wants it, though *he bestows all his goods*  
*to feed the poor, and though he gives his*  
*Body to be burned*, yet, the Text tells us,  
*it shall profit him nothing*. The expres-  
 sion is of the same kind with That in  
 Gal. v. 2, *Behold, I Paul say unto you,*  
*that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall pro-*  
*fit you nothing*: Circumcision, was in its  
 own Nature a thing of indifference; *Cir-*  
*cumcision*, as he elsewhere tells them, is  
 nothing,

## *Of the Virtue of Charity.*

323

*nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing.* SERM.  
But if they forced it upon the *Gentile* XIV.  
Converts as a *Necessary part of Christi-*  
*anity, This was a destroying of Charity,*  
and their Religion (he declares) would be  
in vain.

2dly, FROM what has been above said  
concerning the true Nature and Spirit of  
Christianity, we may easily answer That  
Question usually put by those of the  
Church of Rome; *Where was the Re-*  
*formed Religion: before the Times of the*  
*Reformers?* The Answer is: 'Twas Then,  
just where it is Now, even in the *Gospel*  
*of Christ*; studied and obeyed by all Sin-  
cere Followers of *Truth and Charity.*  
Which Rule, whosoever in *Any* Age, or  
in *Any* Country of the World, has walk-  
ed by; That person was a true Disciple  
of Christ: And whosoever follows any  
*Other* Rule, is in *No* Age and in *No*  
Country a good Christian. Gal. vi. 16,  
*As many as walk according to This Rule,*  
*Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon*  
*the Israel of God.* For *wheresoever two or*  
*three are gathered together in the Name*  
*of Christ,* (whether they be two or three  
VOL. III. Y 2 thousands,

S E R M. *thousands, or two or three single persons;)*

XIV. *There (says our Lord) am I in the midst of them.*

3dly, FROM what has been above said, we may easily understand in what Sense it is, that *Zeal* and *Moderation* are *Both of them* in Scripture equally recommended as Virtues. When the Question is concerning things *indifferent* in their own nature, concerning matters of *Party* and *Divisions* among *Men*, concerning any *Doctrines* or *Practices* of *Human* Appointment; then the Rule is, *Let your Moderation be known unto all men*, Phil. iv. 15: And *Ephes. iv. 2, With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love.* But when the matter in question is a *Moral Virtue*, or a *plain and express Command* of God; Then, 'tis good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, Gal. iv. 18. For Christians, are to be a people zealous of good Works, Tit. ii. 14. And to be careless or indifferent in the cause of *Virtue* and *Righteousness*, is being in the case of the Church of *Laodicea*; Rev. iii. 13, *I know thy Works, that thou art neither cold*



## Of the Virtue of Charity.

325

nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot; So SERM. XIV.  
then, because thou art luke-warm, and nei-  
ther cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of  
my Mouth. In matters of Party and  
Factions; in questions relating to the  
Powers and to the Doctrines of Men; God  
knows, men are apt to be *Hot enough*:  
But for enquiring impartially after the  
Knowledge of *Truth*, and for promoting  
the Practice of universal *Righteousness and*  
*Charity*; 'twere well if the Warmest a-  
mong Christians in these corrupt Ages,  
were in their Zeal even so much as luke-  
warm.

4thly and Lastly, FROM what has been  
said, we may learn the true Meaning of  
that Exhortation of St Paul, 1 Cor. i. 10,  
*I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of*  
*our Lord Jesus Christ, that—there be no*  
*divisions among you, but that ye be perfect-*  
*ly joined together in the same mind, and in*  
*the same judgment.* His Meaning is not,  
that they must be all exactly of one opi-  
nion in every thing: For such an Unity  
cannot possibly arise, but either from per-  
fect and infallible Knowledge, which is  
not attainable in This World; or from  
Y 3 gross

SERM. gross Ignorance and Darknes, which is an  
 XIV. effect of great Corruption. But the plain  
 meaning of St Paul is, that they ought  
 to be *joined together in the same charitable*  
*mind, and in the same charitable judgment*  
*towards each other, notwithstanding any*  
*differences in Opinion.* Thus he express-  
 ly explains himself, *Rom. xv. 5, God*  
*grant you to be like-minded one towards*  
*another:* He does not say, *like-minded* or  
*of like judgment, concerning Things;*  
*For That's in no man's Power:* But *like-*  
 *minded, or alike well-affectioned, towards*  
*each Other's Persons.* So likewise, *Eph.*  
*iv. 3, Endeavouring to keep the Unity of*  
*the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace:* And  
 how was That to be done? Was it by  
 compelling men to pretend that they All  
 think alike? No: For This, instead of  
 Unity of Spirit in the Bond of Peace, is  
 indeed nothing else, but either Unity of  
 Opinion in the Bond of Ignorance, or  
 Unity of Practice in the Bond of Hypo-  
 crisy. But the Apostle's meaning is, Keep  
 the Unity of the Spirit, *With all lowliness*  
*(says he) and meekness, with long-suffering,*  
*forbearing one another in Love.* Again:  
*Phil.*

*Of the Virtue of Charity.*

327

*Phil. ii. 2, That ye be like-minded; how? SERM. XIV.*  
*why, having the same love, being of one*  
*accord, of one mind; let nothing be done*  
*through strife or vain-glory, but in low-*  
*liness of Mind. St Peter also explains*  
*himself after the same manner, 1 Pet. iii.*  
*8, Finally be ye all of one mind. How?*  
*Is it by following each other ignorantly*  
*and implicitly? No: but, having compas-*  
*sion (says he) one of another, love as Bre-*  
*thren, be pitiful, be courteous. This is*  
*That Charity, which whosoever has not,*  
*the Text clearly affirms he cannot be a*  
*good Christian: And whosoever has it,*  
*cannot easily fail in any Other instances of*  
*Virtue; For Love, is the Fulfilling of the*  
*Law.*



[illegible]





# SERMON XV.

The Nature of Relative Duties.



COL. iii. 20, 21, 22.

*Children, obey your Parents in all things ; for This is well-pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your Masters according to the flesh.*



**I**T is the constant Method of SERMON.  
 St Paul in all his Epistles, XV.  
 first to inlarge upon and explain distinctly the particular point or question, which was the occasion of his writing at That time

S E R M. time to *That particular Church*; and then  
 XV. to add such *general* exhortations to the  
 practice of *all Christian Duties and Vir-*  
 tues, as might at all times be of Use to  
*All Churches*, and to *every Christian* in all  
 Ages and in every part of the World.  
 These *general* Exhortations are, in the  
 main, the *same* in *All* his epistles; easy  
 and plain, universal and unvaried, suited  
 to all Capacities, and containing the most  
 important and fundamental Principles of  
 Religion. The *former part* of the several  
 Epistles usually relates to some *particu-*  
*lar Controversy* between the *Jewish and*  
*Gentile Converts*, which at *That* time  
 gave Trouble to the Apostles: And *These*  
*parts* of his Writings cannot be rightly un-  
 derstood any other way, than by attending  
 carefully to the *occasion* and *State* of the  
*particular question* which he is there de-  
 termining. And therefore it has been a great  
 Errour in these latter Ages of the World,  
 and the Cause of many vain disputes a-  
 mong Christians, that, without attend-  
 ing to the Design and Scope of a  
 Discourse written in an argumentative  
 manner, Men have frequently picked out  
 and

and applied to *Themselves* single Passages, SERM.  
XV.  
which, in the course of the Apostle's Argument, had plainly a View only to the State of the then *Jewish* or *Gentile Church*. From this *One* mistake, 'tis evident, have sprung *all* the vain Controversies concerning *Faith* and *Works*, concerning *Justification* and *Sanctification*, concerning *Election* and *Reprobation*, and the like: wherewith while the Minds of Men have been needlessly distracted, they have been the *less apt* to attend to the *great and weightier Matters* of the Law, to the *moral* and *general Exhortations*, repeated and inculcated universally in *every* epistle, as things by *every* Christian *indisputably easy to be understood*, and *indispensably necessary to be practised*.

THE Words of my Text are part of the *general Exhortation*, which concludes the epistle to the *Colossians*. In the *Beginning* of This chapter the Apostle exhorts them to *set their affections on heavenly things*, to *mortify every vitious and inordinate appetite*, to lay aside all *Malice* and *Contentiousness* among themselves, and to live in the practice of universal *Love, Charity*

SERMON. *ty and Good-Will: And in the Latter part*  
 XV. *of the chapter, he recommends to them*  
 the *Relative Duties of life; the Duties of*  
*Husbands and Wives, of Children and Pa-*  
*rents, of Masters and Servants, of Supe-*  
*riours and Inferiours in all Relations.*  
*Children, obey your Parents in all things;*  
*for This is well-pleasing unto the Lord:*  
*Fathers, provoke not your children to an-*  
*ger, lest they be discouraged: Servants, o-*  
*bey in all things your Masters according to*  
*the Flesh.*

I N discoursing upon these words; I shall, *First, distinctly* take Notice of the several *Particulars* contained in the Text: And, *Secondly*, I shall thence deduce this *General Observation*; that the due Performance of the *Relative Duties of Life*, is a principal Means of obtaining both the Blessings of the *present World*, and the Happiness of *That which is to come*.

I. IN the *First* place, That which stands *first and most obviously* observable in the Text, is this *Precept*; *Children, obey your Parents*. In his epistle to the *Ephesians*, the same Apostle expresses this Precept Thus: *Children, obey your Pa-*  
*rents*



*The Nature of Relative Duties.*

333

*rents in the Lord; for This is Right: Honour thy Father and Mother, which is the first Commandment with Promise, ch. vi. 1.* SERM.  
XV.

In which expression, there is an allusion to the *Order or Placing* of the Commandments in the Law of *Moses*; This being the First in the *Second Table*, the First of those commandments which declare our *Duty towards Men*; the First to which is annexed expressly a *particular Reward*; the *First Commandment with Promise*. The natural observation arising from which particular, is, the *reasonableness* and *goodness* of the *Great Commandments of God* both in the *Law* and the *Gospel*. *God* begins where *Nature itself* does; making the *same* things to be the *prime Foundations of His Law*, which in the nature of things themselves, without *Any Law*, were most reasonable to be practised. The *Gospel* carries indeed This and all other *Moral Precepts* to a much *higher* degree of improvement, requiring us to extend our Love towards *all* men, and our Desire of doing good even unto *Enemies* themselves. But the *prior* obligation, is That of *Gratitude to Benefactors*;

SERM. *fact*ors; and of making *just Returns* to

XV. Those, from whom we have received the Benefits of Life. Nevertheless, as clear as this Obligation is, both in the Nature of Things and in the Command of God; yet, not Irreligion and Atheism only, but *Superstition* also has found means to evade *This*, in like manner as it does all other moral and eternal Obligations. God, (says our Saviour, *Matt. xv. 4. God*) *commanded, saying, Honour thy Father and Mother: But Ye say, Whosoever shall say to his Father or his Mother, it is a Gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by Me,* (that is, 'tis given to the Service of the Temple, or to some other of what they then called *pious Uses*,) *he shall be free;* he shall be discharged from all Obligation to relieve his necessitous Parents. Thus (says our Lord) *ye have made the commandment of God of none Effect by your Tradition.* Notions somewhat of the same nature have, in *All Ages* of the World, prevailed over superstitious and corrupt Minds; teaching them to value things that promote outward Pomp and Show, and Distinctions of Men under Party-Denominations,

nominations, more than Obedience to the S E R M.  
external and unchangeable Duties of God's XV.  
*Moral Law.* 

2dly. THE Next thing proper to be taken notice of in the Text, is, that the Particulars here mentioned of the Duty of *Children* and *Servants*, are Only *Instances* of the General *Exhortation*, designed to extend proportionably to persons in *All* Relative Stations and Circumstances of Life *whatsoever*. As Rom. xiii. 7. *Render to All, their Dues; Tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour.* To *Magistrates*, there is due from the Subject *Obedience* according to the Laws of the Country, in matters not opposite to the Law of God; *Peaceableness* and *Quietness* under Government, and a willing *Contribution* towards the *Support* of it. To *Teachers*, or *Spiritual Superiours*, there is due from the People *Such* Respect, as to *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, appointed to exhort Men continually to the Practice of Virtue, and to assist in all the *Administrations* of Religion; Towards *These*, there ought to be in men  
a Wil-

S E R M. 2 Willingness to hear and be informed by  
 XV. them, and a readiness to observe and practise what they teach; not blindly and implicitly, (which is the Doctrine of Rome,) but in all things which they can show to be the *Doctrine and Commands of God*. To Masters, there is due from Servants *Diligence and Industry, Honesty and Fidelity, Submission and Obedience*, according to the direction in the Text; *Servants, obey---your Masters according to the Flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of Heart, fearing God; And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men*. In like manner, Eph. vi. 7. *With good Will* (says he) *doing Service, as to the Lord, and not to men; Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free*. The only difference here to be observed, is, that whereas the Servants mentioned by the Apostle, were, in those days, *Slaves*, under the absolute Power of their Masters, without Any Relief under the greatest oppressions; (for which reason St Peter exhorts Such to be patient under the severest



severest hardships, considering that it is SERM.  
*thank-worthy, if a man for conscience to-* XV.  
*wards God indure grief, suffering wrong-*  
*fully: Whereas (I say) in the Apostles*  
*days the state of Servants was absolute*  
*Slavery, 'tis Now on the contrary always*  
*to be Understood, that the Duty and Ob-*  
*ligation of those in the lowest Station to-*  
*wards their respective Superiours in This*  
*kind, is such only as arises from Law and*  
*Contract, and is wholly limited by those*  
*Measures. And This concerning the se-*  
*veral particular relative Persons, to whom*  
*the Apostle designed his exhortation to*  
*extend.*

3dly. THE *Third* Particular observable  
in the Text, is, the unbounded manner  
in which the Apostle expresses the *General*  
Duty of *Subjection* to Superiours, in eve-  
ry Relative Station of Life: *Children,*  
*obey your Parents in all things: Servants,*  
*obey in all things your Masters according*  
*to the Flesh.* So elsewhere: *Let the Wives*  
*(says he) be subject to their own Husbands*  
*in every thing: And Tit. ii. 9. Exhort*  
*Servants to be obedient unto their own*  
*Masters; and to please them well in all*  
*things,*

S E R M. *things.* Reason, and the Nature of things,  
 XV. and the general Usage of all language,  
 ~~~~~ showeth, that in these and all other the like  
 expressions, the phrase, *in every thing*, and
in all things, must necessarily be understood
 to mean only, *in all things* just, *in all things*
lawful, *in all things that are honest and fit*
to be done. In *Human Writings*, these ge-
neral manners of expression, arising from
 the known and vulgar use of Language, are
never misunderstood: And therefore to
 misunderstand them in the *Sacred Books*
only, is mere Perverseness. The Gospel nei-
 ther *inlarges* nor *diminishes* any *Superiour's*
Power; it neither *adds to*, nor *takes from*
 any *Inferiour's Right.* In *These Cases*, it
 only confirms and explains the Obligations
 of Nature; and inforces the *Practice* of
 the respective Duties, with stronger and
 more powerful *Motives.* As therefore in
 all *other Writings*, so in *Scripture* like-
 wise; the true, the natural, and evident
 Meaning of such Phrases as these, *in all*
things, *in every thing*, and the like; is
 not what the word, *all*, suggests in its
single Signification; but what the *vulgar*
 sense of it is, in *such* expressions and sen-
 tences.

tences. When we are taught that the S E R M.
Commands of God, or the Laws of Truth XV.
and Right, are to be obeyed in all things; 
the nature of the Thing, not the force of
the single words, shows that the Obedi-
ence is to be universal and without excep-
tion. In other cases, where the very same
words are used; (as, in the Text, Ser-
vants obey your Masters in all things;) the
nature of the thing There likewise no less
plainly shows, that this obedience in all
things is to be limited, by its consistency
with the Commands of any Superiour
Master either on Earth or in Heaven.
In All language, the signification of every
word necessarily depends upon the other
words with which it is connected: And
where no Controversy is concerned, nor
Prejudice interposes, 'tis always under-
stood, and cannot but be understood to be
so, by all Understandings, and by all Capa-
cities equally, from the Highest to the
Meanest. When the Scripture mentions
The Everlasting God, 'tis not the force of
the word *Everlasting*, but the application
of it to the *First Cause and Author of all*
things, that makes it denote a true and

S E R M. absolute *Eternity*: For when the same

XV. Scripture mentions the *everlasting Mountains*, 'tis understood by all men both of the greatest and of the smallest Understandings, that it there signifies only *such* a Duration, as is proper to the Subject of which it is spoken. These things are, *in their own Nature*, exceedingly evident: And yet where *Party*, or *Interest*, or *Controversy* is concerned, 'tis wonderful to what a degree men have sometimes, even in so *plain* a case, imposed upon the *ignorant*, and upon the *learned* too. I shall mention but *One* Instance, and leave *Others* to be judged of by the same proportion. In the question about *Transubstantiation*, the Writers of the Church of *Rome* allege with great confidence, that the *natural*, the *literal*, the *first* and *obvious* sense of the words, *This is my Body*, is plainly in favour of *Their* side of the Question. And yet in reality, the very contrary to *This*, is evidently true. For the *natural*, the *literal*, the *first* and *obvious* sense of the *phrase*, is not that which arises from the signification of the word *Body* singly, but *That* which arises from

The Nature of Relative Duties.

341

from its natural signification in such an S E R M. expression, wherein *commemorative Bread* XV. is affirmed to be the *Body of Him who is commemorated thereby*. When a *Picture* is spoken of, as being the *person* it represents; the *natural*, the *literal*, the *first* and *obvious* sense of the expression, is not that 'tis really, but that 'tis *representatively*, That person. When our Lord says, *I am the true Vine*; the question is not what the word, *Vine*, naturally signifies in other cases; but what it *There* most *naturally* and *obviously* signifies, when a *Teacher* calls *Himself* a *Vine*, and his *Followers* its *Branches*. When *Wisdom* declares concerning herself, *Ecclus. xxiv. 21. They that eat me, shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me, shall yet be thirsty*; the *natural* and *obvious*, nay, the *literal* signification of the whole Sentence, arises from what the terms, *eat* and *drink*, do *Then* most *naturally* and *obviously* signify, when a person is speaking, not concerning Food, but about *imbibing* and *digesting* a Doctrine. But to return from This Digression.

S E R M. 4thly. THE Next Particular observable in the Text, is the *Reason* or *Motive* annexed by the Apostle in order to enforce his exhortation: *For This* (says he) *is well-pleasing unto the Lord.* In his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, (as I before observed;) after having laid down the same exhortation as in the text; instead of enforcing it, as he does here, with telling them that *This is well-pleasing unto the Lord*; he cites the words of the *Commandment* itself, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*; and adds, by way of observation, that *This is the First Commandment with Promise*, ch. vi. 2. The *Promise* he means, is; *That thy days may be long, in the Land which the Lord thy God has given thee.* By which *Promise*, as delivered in the *Commandment to the Jews*, God by a wise and suitable Disposition of Things, very aptly annexed the Blessing of *Long Life*, to *Them* that paid due Regard to Those who were the Means of giving them Life. But then, even under the *Law*, (very certainly, though not so explicitly as in the Revelation of the *Gospel*,) 'tis always to be understood, that in

all Promises of This nature, there was a S E R M.
XV.
further Reference to a Future and a Better Life. Thus in the 11th to the Hebrews, the Apostle assures, that *Abraham* understood the promised inheritance, to be laid up for him in that heavenly city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. Thus the prophetick Tradition among the antient Jews, that *Jerusalem* should be built up with Saphirs, Tobit. xiii. 16; is by St *John* made the description of That City of God which cometh down from Heaven. Thus our Saviour's Promise, that *the Meek shall inherit the Earth*, Matt. v. 5; may well have Reference at least, if it be not expressly applied by him in his first intention, to That New Heaven and New Earth, wherein Righteousness is to dwell for ever. Thus, to mention but One Instance more; That Expression of *Ezekiel*, ch. xiii. 9. They shall not be in the Assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the Writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the Land of Israel; cannot be doubted but that implicitly means the same thing, as, in the New-Testament-language,

Z 4

SER.M. guage, being not written in the Book of
 XV. Life.

5thly and Lastly, FROM the relative *Antithesis* in the respective parts of the text; *Children, obey your Parents in all things; and, Fathers provoke not your Children to anger*: 'Tis observable, that as in *Nature*, in the frame and construction of this *material* Fabrick of the Universe, all *operations* of the parts of *Matter* are *mutual* upon each other, for the Support and Preservation of the Whole; so in *morality* and *religion*, All *Duties* are of *reciprocal* Obligation. Wherever the Duty of the *Inferiour* is mentioned, 'tis always to be understood that the Duty of the *Superiour* is proportionably supposed. *Parents* are to support, and be gentle towards their Children; Eph. vi 4. *bringing them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*. *Masters* are to exact Service, not rigorously and cruelly, but with Mildness, and according to the Terms contracted for. *Governours in the Church* are not to *lord it over the Heritage of God*, nor to assume to themselves dominion over the Consciences of Men; but,

but, as faithful Stewards of the Myſteries of God, to aſſiſt men in *underſtanding* the Will of God, and to exhort them continually to *practiſe* it in Peace and Love. *Magiſtrates* are to govern according to thoſe Inſtructions of *Job*, ch. xxix. 14, *I put on righteousneſs, and it cloathed me; my judgment was as a Robe and a Diadem. I was eyes to the Blind, and feet was I to the Lame. I was a Father to the Poor; and the Cauſe which I knew not, I ſearched out.* Laſtly, *Princes, or Supreme Civil Governours*, are to uſe Power within the limits of Law and Reaſon: Conſidering the admonition of the Author of the Book of *Wiſdom*, ch. vi. 2, *Give ear, you that rule the people, and that glory in the multitude of Nations; For Power is given you of the Lord, and Sovereignty from the Higheſt; who ſhall try your Works, and ſearch out your Counſels:-----For he which is Lord over All ſhall fear no man's perſon, neither ſhall he ſtand in awe of any man's greatneſs: For he hath made the ſmall and great, and careth for All alike.*

II. HAVING

346 *The Nature of Relative Duties.*

S E R M. II. HAVING thus at large considered
 XV. the several distinct *Particulars* contained
 in the Text: I shall Now briefly from
 the Whole, deduce this *General* Observation; that the Due Performance of the *Relative Duties* of Life, is a principal Means of obtaining both the Blessings of the *present* World, and the Happiness of *That which is to come*. As to the Happiness of the *Life to come*; the Promise of *That* being annexed to the Observance of *All* God's Commandments in general, needs not here be particularly enlarged upon: 'Tis sufficiently implied in those words of the Text, *This is well-pleasing unto the Lord*. But what in This case is peculiarly remarkable, is, that the Blessings and Happiness of the *present* Life, are *not only* by the Promise of God *annexed to*, but even in the Nature of things do essentially *consist in*, the due Performance of these *Relative Duties*. As, in the *natural* Body, the Health and Preservation of the *Whole* depends upon *every Part's* performing its proper office; So, in every *political* Society, *Inferiours* and *Superiours* in all the various stations
 of

The Nature of Relative Duties. 347

of Life depend *mutually* upon each other, S E R M.
and the Welfare of the *Whole* upon the XV.
Duties of *Both*. *Superiours*, in the con-
scientious performance of *their Duty*, are
the *Protectors and Guardians* of the Rights
and Properties of *Those below them*: And
Inferiours, acting under a Sense of Duty,
moved by *Love and Reason* more than by
Compulsion or Fear, are the most solid
Support of the Authority and Peace and
Happiness of *Those above them*. The *Cor-*
ruption and Depravity of Mankind
makes it *necessary*, by the intervention of
Human *Laws*, to *compel* men in *some*
measure to perform these respective
Duties: But a true sense of *religion*,
and of the *Reasonableness* and *Usefulness*
and *essential Obligation* of the Duties
themselves, would oblige them by a much
stronger and securer Tie, to do all the
same things *freely and willingly, heartily*
and sincerely, in publick and in private;
which the best and wisest Laws can but
compel those who want such a sense of
Religion, to do *unwillingly, slightly and*
superficially, in publick Appearance only,
and in the Sight of Men. Religion there-
fore

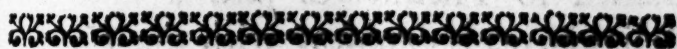
SERM. fore and true Virtue, if they prevailed in
 XV. the World, would obtain the same happy
 Ends *fully and effectually*, which the best
 and wisest Laws can do but *in part*; and
 Laws are made only to supply, in the best
 manner they can, the Want of true Reli-
 gion and Virtue among Men. *The Law*
is not made for a righteous man, but for
the lawless and disobedient, for the un-
godly and for sinners, for the unholy and
the profane, 1 Tim. i. 9. Did men uni-
 versally, from a *sense* of the *Right* and
Reason of the *thing itself*, live in an uni-
 form and conscientious Performance of
 the *Relative Duties of Life*; the Prophe-
 cies of That Great Happiness which un-
 der *typical* Representations is foretold as
 coming in the days of the *Messias*, would
 be *literally* fulfilled: *Is. ii. 4, They shall*
beat their swords into plough-shares, and
their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall
not lift up sword against nation, neither
shall they learn war any more: And ch. lx.
 18, *Violence shall no more be heard in thy*
land, wasting nor destruction within thy
borders; but thou shalt call thy Walls Sal-
vation, and thy Gates Praise:-----Thy
 people

people also shall be *All Righteous*. But S E R M.
however, even as things *Now* are; would XV.
Superiours in All Times and Places, who
are the Great *Example* and *Direction* to
the World, endeavour, each in their re-
spective stations, to make use of That
Power wherewith God has intrusted
them, always to the Protection and Sup-
port of *Right*; the Benefits which would
thence accrue to Mankind, even in this pre-
sent imperfect and corrupt State, would be
inconceivably Great. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, *He*
that ruleth over men must be just, ruling
in the Fear of God: And he shall be as the
Light of the Morning, when the Sun riseth,
even a morning without clouds; as the ten-
der Grass springing out of the Earth, by
clear shining after Rain. And Ps. lxxii.
4, *He shall judge the People according*
unto Right, and defend the Poor,-----and
punish the wrong-doer.-----He shall come
down like Rain into a fleece of Wool, even as
the Drops that water the Earth: In His
time shall the Righteous flourish, yea, and
abundance of Peace so long as the Moon
endureth.



SERMON XVI.

The Inconsistency of the Love of
God with the Love of the World.



I JOH. ii. 15.

*Love not the World, neither the
things that are in the World:
If any man love the World, the
Love of the Father is not in him.*



THE Great End and Design of SERM.
Religion, is, by the Tryal of XVI.
mens Virtue and Integrity in
the present World, to qualify
them for the Happiness of
That which is to come: That they who
have

SERM. have been *Faithful* in a small and temporary Trust, committed to them *Here*; *XVI.* may hereafter be put in Possession of a never-fading *Inheritance*, which shall be *their Own* for ever. As our Saviour has largely and distinctly set forth this matter, in his Parable of the Unjust Steward, *Luke xvi.*

MISTAKING this True End and Design of Religion, men have fallen into Two contrary Extremes: Some having framed to Themselves *such* a notion of Religion, as is *consistent* with the *Vices* of this present World; and Others, on the contrary, *such* a one as is *not consistent* with some of the most considerable and important *Duties* of *Life*. Some have placed the highest Excellency of Religion in *retiring* wholly from the World, so as to render themselves altogether *useless* in it: And Others, on the contrary, imagining Religion principally to consist in certain *Forms* and *Ceremonies*, or in the Profession of certain *Systems* of *empty Opinions*; indulge themselves in the Practice of known *Immoralities*, at the same time that they are most zealously religious.

gious. The proper Remedy for Both S E R M.
these Mistakes, is to endeavour to give XVI.
men a *just* Idea of the *Nature* of True
Religion; and of the Influence it ought
to have upon mens whole Behaviour, with
regard to the *World*, and to the things
that are in it. For which Purpose I have
chosen these words of the Apostle: *Love*
not the World, neither the things that are
in the World; If any man love the World,
the Love of the Father is not in him.

IN discoursing upon which words, I
shall endeavour to show, 1st, *What* the
Apostle here means by *the World*, and
the Things that are in it; which he ex-
horts us, *not to love*. 2^{dly}, *What* That
Love of the Father is, with which the
Love of the World is inconsistent. And
3^{dly}, *What* are the principal *Reasons and*
Motives, upon which the Apostle here so
earnestly cautions men against That *Love*
of the World, which he thus describes
as inconsistent with the *Love of God*.

I. WHAT the Apostle here means by
the World, and by *the Things that are in*
it, which he exhorts us *Not to love*, he
himself expressly and distinctly explains

354 *The Inconsistency of the Love of*

S E R M. in the words next following the Text:

XVI. *For all that is in the World, saith he, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World. That is to say: Not That World which God has created, or any of the things that he has made in it; but That world which Sinners have fashioned to themselves, and which is entirely the Work of their own Invention. Every Creature of God is Good; and every thing that he has made may be made use of with Thanksgiving: But there is an imaginary World, which corrupt Minds have framed to themselves in Perverseness, by Abuse and Misapplication of the good Creatures of God. And concerning the World in This sense of the word, this Wicked Form and Fashion of a World, it may very well and properly be said, what the Author of the Book of Wisdom says concerning Death, ch. i. 13, that God made it not: 'Tis made entirely through Enmity to Him, and in direct Opposition to His Commands. The Particulars of which the World in This sense consists; the wicked and corrupt World,*
which

which is *not of the Father*, which is no S E R M.
part of the creation of God; *all the* XVI.
things that are in it, as the Apostle here
expresses himself, are reducible under
Three Heads.

T H E *First*, is the Desire of *unlawful*
Pleasures; all *Intemperance and Debauch-*
ery, Luxuriousness, Drunkenness and Un-
cleanness. And These are styled by the
Apostle, *the Lust of the Flesh*, because
they are the things into which men are
hurried by *Passion and Appetite*, which
is what the Scripture styles *Flesh*; in op-
position to the Dictates of *Reason and*
Religion, which is what the Scripture
calls being *led by the Spirit.* All the *Good*
things of Life, which God has created to
be *injoyed with Temperance and Thanksgiv-*
ing, according to the Ends and Mea-
sures of *Nature*, within the Limits of
Reason, Sobriety and Good manners, and
consistent with the more Noble Views
and Improvements of *Religion*: All *These*
things, I say, are the Gifts and Blessings
of God, *who giveth us richly all things to*
enjoy, 1 Tim. vi. 17. But when men, in-
stead of governing their *Passions and Ap-*

SERM.

XVI.

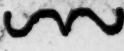
petites by Reason, do on the contrary suffer their Reason to be over-ruled by *Passions and Appetites*; subverting the natural Order of God's Creation, and giving no attention to those Superiour Faculties, which were designed to distinguish men from the Beasts that perish: their Injoyments in This case are of Such a nature, that they can neither *pray* for them *beforehand*, nor *return Thanks* for them *afterwards*, as *Blessings* of God; but are forced to reflect upon them with *Shame*, whether they will or no; as being conscious that these things proceed *not* from the Father and Creator of the Universe, but from what the Apostle here styles the *World* by way of opposition; *That World*, which is an *Enemy* to God; and concerning which St Paul speaks, when he says of Wicked men, that *the God of This World has blinded their minds*, 2 Cor. iv. 4.

THIS is the *First* Particular; *the Lust of the Flesh*. The *Second* Head, under which the Apostle here reduces *all the things that are in the World* in the *wicked and corrupt World*, is the *unlawful*

ful Desire of Riches; the Desire of Riches SERM.
by unjustifiable Means, and to no valu- XVI.
able Purposes. And these are here styled
the Lust of the Eyes; because the Love of
Riches, as such, and as it stands here distin-
guished from Other vitious affections; the
Covetous Desire of Riches for Riches sake,
without any regard to the True and Be-
neficial Uses of them; is but feeding the
Eyes with a mere fruitless View of un-
profitable Treasure, with the empty Shows
of Vanity and Deceit. *What Good is there,*
says the Wise man, *Eccles. v. 11, What*
Good is there to the Owners thereof, saving
the beholding of them with their Eyes?
There is One alone, says he, *and there is*
not a Second, ch. iv. 8, *yea, he hath nei-*
ther Child, nor Brother; yet is there no
end of all his Labour, neither is his Eye
satisfied with Riches; neither saith he, for
whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of
good? This is also Vanity. The Phrase,
neither is his Eye satisfied with Riches is
the same as what he elsewhere expresses,
Prov. xxvii. 20, *Hell and destruction are*
never full; so the Eyes of man are never
satisfied. And from hence have been de-

S E R M. rived those *particular manners of speaking*
 XVI. in Scripture, where *Liberality* is styled a
 Prov. xxii. *Bountiful Eye*, and a *Single (or Open)*
 9. *Eye*; and *Covetousness*, an *Evil (or nig-*

gardly) Eye; and the like. Whenever
Riches are desired and employed as In-
 struments of *Good*, they are Then indeed
real Blessings of Providence; *Blessings* to
 the *Possessors* of them, whom they enable
 to have *Great Influence* in promoting Ju-
 stice, Righteousness, Charity, and every
 Other good Work in the World; And
Blessings to *Others*, who are Partakers of
 the *Effects* of those good *Influences*. But
 when they are only what the Apostle here
 styles the *Lust of the Eyes*; the Food
 either of *Covetousness* merely, *without*
Use; or of *Vanity* and *Folly*, in an *ill Use*
 of them: The Desire of them, in That
 case, is not an *Appetite* of God's creating;
 'Tis not of the *Father*, but of the *World*;
 'Tis the creature merely of a *perverted*
Imagination, and of a *corrupt Will*; 'Tis
 a *Desire* that will perpetually put men
 upon obtaining *Wealth* by *ill Methods*,
 and upon employing it in *nothing Good*.
 The *Temptations* that This *Appetite* ex-
 poses

poses men to, are the Foundation of great S E R M.
Corruption. *They that will be rich, (says XVI.*
the Apostle,) fall into Temptation and a 
Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful
Lusts, which drown men in destruction and
perdition: For the Love of Money is the
Root of all Evil: Which while Some co-
veted after, they have erred from the
Faith, and pierced themselves through with
many Sorrows: That is, they have expo-
sed themselves to be seduced into such
corrupt Practices, the avoiding whereof
is That Part of true Religion, which
St James calls a man's keeping himself un-
spotted from the World.

THE Third Head, under which the
Apostle here reduces *all the things that*
are in the World; in the wicked and cor-
rupt World, considered as opposite to God;
is Ambition, or the unlawful Desire of Do-
minion and Power. And This is here styled
by the Apostle the Pride of Life, because
both the Desire of obtaining Power by un-
righteous methods, and the Pleasure of ex-
ercising it in ways of Insolence and Oppres-
sion, have their whole Foundation in Pride;
in a presumptuous Imagination, that Right
and Reason and Equity are things of No

A a 4reality,

S E R M.
XVI.

*reality, and which may at any time give place to Our Wills and Pleasures. Power, considered in itself, as derived from God the Fountain of Power, and as being the Great Instrument of securing Right and Justice in the World; is indeed justly valuable, and most reasonably attended with the Highest Marks of Dignity and Esteem. Upon which account, not only Angels in Heaven, but Magistrates also upon Earth, are in some passages of Scripture called Gods; and God himself is, upon the same ground, styled by Antient Writers the * Fountain of Divinity: Not, the Fountain of the Deity, as the words were in after-times ignorantly misapplied: (For That, is styling God the Fountain of Himself:) But the Fountain of Divinity, meaning all That Dignity, Authority and Power, which is in Scripture at any time ascribed either to Angels or to Men. Power, I say, in This sense, as derived from God, and exercised to His Glory, and to the Benefit of the World; is indeed greatly valuable, and*

* *מַעְיָן הַדִּיּוּת*, not *מַעְיָן הַיְּהוָה*. See, Reply to Dr. Waterland's Defence, p. 5, 48, 49, 219. And, Observations on Dr. Waterland's 2d Defence, p. 53.

God with the Love of the World. 361

most justly attended with all possible S E R M.
Marks of Honour and Regard. But the *De-* XVI.
sire of Power for the Purposes of *Ambition*
only, and for the *Pleasure* of bearing *Rule*;
is what the Apostle here, with great propriety and strictness calls *The Pride of Life*; which is *not of the Father, but of the World*. 'Tis *That Pride*, or *That* setting up of *Self-Will* in exposition to *Reason and Equity*, which is the Ground and Foundation of almost every Immorality. The *Intemperances* and *Debaucheries* Men are guilty of, for want of *Government of Themselves*, are most properly indeed included under the *First Head*, which is the *Lust of the Flesh*. The *Second Head*, which is the *Lust of the Eyes*, or the *Covetous Desire of Riches* for *Riches* sake, is also frequently the occasion of much *Corruption*, of many and great *particular Acts* of *Injustice* and *Hardship* towards *Others*. But the most *general* and *extensive* cause of an *habitually injurious and oppressive* Temper, is *This Pride of Life*; this *Love of Power, Domination, and Self-Will*. From hence usually arise *Wars, Desolations, Tyrannies*, and all the *Great, Extensive, and Merciless Oppressions*, which totally
extinguish

S E R M. extinguish that universal Benevolence to-
 XVI. wards Mankind, which is the *Charity* re-
 presented in Scripture as *the Fulfilling of*
the whole Law. To the same Cause also
 are owing generally, all the *Great Breaches*
 of our Duty towards God. For, *Whence*
arises That strange Negligence and Uncon-
cernedness for the Discovery of Truth,
 which is the Cause of almost all the Irre-
 ligious and Superstition in the World; but
 from this *Pride* of imagining, that our
 own *Wills, Pleasures and Passions,* are
Guides preferable to the *Reason and Truth*
 of things? And whence comes it to pass,
 that so many *monstrously absurd Opinions*
 and *Idolatrous Practices* have prevailed in
 the Nations of the World; contrary to all
 the common *Sense and Reason* of Man-
 kind, contrary to the *natural Dictates* of
 every man's own *Conscience,* and in oppo-
 sition to the protestations and perpetual
 Endeavours of all *Rational and Virtuous*
 Men: Whence, I say, has This come to
 pass; but that it has best served the Pur-
 poses of *Ambition and Tyranny,* to keep
 Men in such *Ignorance* by all possible
Frauds, and in the continuance of such
Practices by all the cruel Methods of *Vio-*
lence?

lence? And This may abundantly suffice S E R M.
for explication of the *First Particular*; XVI.
What the Apostle here means by the *World*,
which he exhorts us *not to love*; and by
the Things that are in the World, which
(he saith) are *not of the Father, but of the*
World.

II. I AM to consider *What That Love*
of the Father is, with which the *Love of*
the World is here declared to be inconsis-
tent. Many there are, who by this phrase
of *loving God*, seem to have meant nothing
more than a mere *speculative imagination*,
an *unintelligible enthusiastick Warmth of Af-*
fection, a *notional abstract Zeal*; sometimes
withdrawing Men wholly into a retire-
ment from the most *useful Duties of Life*,
and sometimes *not withdrawing them* from
the *Vicious Practices of the World*. But
the Scripture-sense of *loving God*, is ex-
pressly declared to be the *Keeping his Com-*
mandments, the looking upon *Him* as our
Supreme Governour, and most *Bountiful*
Benefactor; as a *Reasonable Governour*,
whose Commands are to be obeyed not on-
ly out of *Necessity*, but out of *Choice*,
with *cheerfulness* and *affection*, in *Prese-*
rence

S E R M. *rence* to every thing that would entice

XVI. us to transgress them. And This being
 the case, the reason immediately and
 evidently appears, why, *if any man*
love the World, the *World* in the sense
 already explained, *the Love of the Fa-*
ther cannot be *in him*. For, in the Na-
 ture of Things, where-ever two inconsist-
 ent Objects offer themselves *in competition*,
the Object preferred is the *Object lo-*
ved; and the preferring or choosing one
 before the other, is manifestly inconsistent
 with preferring the Other before That.
If any Man therefore *loves the World*,
That World here described by the Apostle,
which is not of the Father; the *Love of*
the Father cannot possibly be *in him*: For
no man can serve Two Masters. Of neces-
 sity he must *either hate the one, and love*
the Other; or *else* he must *hold to the o-*
ther, and despise the first: He *cannot serve*
God and Mammon, Matt. vi. 24. What-
 ever be a man's ultimate View and Aim;
 (as every man always has *some* principal
 and ultimate View;) by *This* will the ge-
 nerality, at least of the *Material* Actions
 of his life, always be determined. If the
 Love

God with the Love of the World. 365

Love of *Truth* and *Reason* and *Right*, (or, S E R M. **XVI.** which is the same thing, a Regard to the *God of Truth* and *Right*,) be his governing Principle; his *Desires* after, and his Use of, the *Pleasures*, *Riches*, and *Power* of *This World*, will, according to the natural Order and Design of God's creation, always be regulated by, and made subservient to, those Greater and more Noble Ends. On the contrary, if these things, not as they are *In the world*, but as they are *Of the world*, and *not of the Father*; if these things, in the manner they are here described by the Apostle, *the Lust of the Flesh*, *the Lust of the Eyes*, and *the Pride of Life*; be the Object of a Man's Desires, principally and ultimately, as the main End which he has continually in View; it cannot be but he will pursue his *Pleasures*, without regard to the limitations of Reason and Religion; he will heap up unto himself *Riches*, by Methods inconsistent with Justice, Equity and Charity; he will endeavour to raise himself to *Honour* by mean and unworthy Compliances; and he will make Use of *Power* to arbitrary and unreasonable Purposes.

And

S E R M. And for *This cause*, these things are in

XVI. Scripture represented as being Enemies to
 God: So that, *if any man love the World,*
the Love of the Father is not in him. With

Rom. xii. 1. regard to *Pleasure* in particular, the Apo-
 stle St Paul exhorts: *I beseech you, bre-*
thren, by the Mercies of God, that ye pre-
sent your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy,
acceptable unto God, which is your reaso-
nable Service; And be not confirmed to

Rom. viii. 7. *This World:* For the Carnal mind is en-
 mity against God; for it is not subject to
 the Law of God, neither indeed can be:
 So then they that are in the Flesh, cannot
 please God. And St Peter, 1 Pet. i. 13,
 14. *Be sober,-----as obedient children;*
Not fashioning yourselves according to the
former Lusts, in your ignorance; But, as
He which hath called you is holy, so be Ye
Holy in all manner of conversation. And
 St James, ch. iv. 4: *Ye Adulterers and*
Adulteresses; know ye not, that the Friend-
ship of the World is Enmity with God;
Whosoever therefore will be a Friend of the
World, is the Enemy of God. In like man-
 ner with regard to *Riches:* In the pas-
 sage before-cited, *They that will be Rich,*
 faith

God with the Love of the World. 367

saith St Paul; that is, they who make S E R M.
Riches their ultimate *End* and *View*, will XVI.
fall into Temptation and a Snare, and in-
to many Foolish and Hurtful Lusts, which
drown men in destruction and perdition,
1 Tim. vi. 9. And therefore in the same
chapter, ver. 17. he mentions *Trusting in*
Riches and *Trusting in the Living God*,
as direct *Opposites* to each other. Lastly,
with Regard to the *Honours and Esteem*
of Men, and the corrupt and unworthy
Compliances, by which the *Pride of Life*
leads Men to aim at *False Reputation* and
Power; *Do I* (says the Apostle) *seek to*
please men? *for if I yet pleased Men, I*
should not be the Servant of Christ,
Gal. i. 10.

IN *This* sense therefore, and for *these*
Causes, it is, that the *Love of the World*, and
the *Love of God*, are in the Text declared
to be inconsistent with each other. And as
He who *loves the World*, the *Wicked World*
in the sense now explained, cannot have
the *Love of the Father in him*: So, on
the reverse, if any Man has the *Love of*
the Father in him, that is, acts steddily
and immoveably upon the Principles of
Truth

S E R M. Truth and Virtue ; to *Him* will the *World*,
 XVI. the *wicked and corrupt* part of the *World*,
 necessarily bear a *Hatred*. Joh. xv. 19. *If ye were of the World, the World would love his own; but because ye are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you. And* ch. xvii. 14. *The World hath hated them, because they are not of the World. The Reason and Ground of which Procedure, is excellently expressed by the Author of the Book of Wisdom, ch. ii. 12. Because the Righteous is not for Our Turn, and he is clean contrary to our Doings; he upbraideth us with our offending the Law, and objecteth to our Infamy the Transgressions of our education. He professeth to have the Knowledge of God, and——was made to reprove Our Thoughts.*

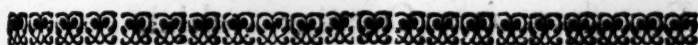
III. T H E *Third* and Last thing I proposed, was to consider the *Reasons and Motives* upon which the Apostle here so earnestly cautions Men against that *Love of the World*, which he thus describes as inconsistent with the *Love of God*. Its *Inconsistency with the Love of God*, that is, of our *Supreme Good* and *ultimate Happiness*;

pinefs; is itself One principal and fufficient S E R M.
Motive. But *This* and *all other Motives* XVI.
 whatfoever, are *included in*, or *reducible*
 to, what the Apostle alleges in the words
 following my Text, ver. 17. *The world*
paſſeth away, and the Luſt thereof; but He
that doth the Will of God, abideth for ever.
 There *can be nothing* in *This World*
 worth purchaſing at the Expence of in-
 curring the Divine diſpleaſure. For all
 the things that are in the World, even
 thoſe that are *innocent*, much more the
Sinful ones here mentioned by the Apoſtle,
 are *obtained* with uneaſineſs and much
 Uncertainty, are *poſſeſſed* with much
 Mixture of Diſſatisfaction, are *preſerved*
 with continual Fear and Hazard of loſing
 them; And, when poſſeſſed in the high-
 eſt Perfection, and for the longeſt Period,
 muſt of neceſſity paſs away in a very few
 years, to return no more for ever. That
 Habit of Mind, which is founded in the
Love of Truth, and in the *Practice of Vir-*
tue, is the only Thing that will continue
 and improve for ever into a complete fe-
 licity in the eternal Kingdom of God.



SERMON XVII.

The Folly of mocking at Sin.



PROV. xiv. 9.

Fools make a Mock at Sin.



HERE is nothing, concern-
ing which Men of great Spi-
rits are more apt to make a
wrong Judgment, than con-
cerning the Notion and true

SERM.
XVII.
~

Extent of *Courage* and Magnanimity.
Courage, is a Braveness of Mind, consist-
ing and showing forth itself in a just
Contempt of Danger. And because this is
a Virtue most usually found in men of bet-

SERM. *ter condition, and of a good education; it*
 XVII. *is therefore generally accompanied with*
 more *reputation and honour, with more*
Value and Esteem in the World, than most
Other single Virtues. For This reason,
those who are not indued with this Vir-
tue, are yet very desirous of being thought
to be so; and, as That which is most
esteemed is always most in danger of being
counterfeited, False Courage is very apt to
supply the Place and the Want of True.
For there is a Courage, which deserves
not That Name; and there is a Hardiness,
which is not a Virtue, but a Vice. Some-
thing of this nature there may be observ-
ed in the instance of almost every Vir-
tue. Superstition, and Forms, and out-
ward Ceremonies, too usually supply the
place of true Piety towards God. Cove-
tousness calls itself Frugality; and the
name of Generosity often covers the real
crime of Profuseness. The most unchri-
stian Vices of Uncharitableness and Perse-
cution frequently pass under the Title of
Zeal; and Love towards God, is (in some
men's opinion) excellently expressed by
Hatred towards their Brethren, towards
 Men

Men very often much more pious than S E R M.
themselves. Thus likewise in the case of XVII.
Courage; Fool-hardiness too often puts on
the Garb of This Virtue; and a senseless
pretending to despise, what ought not and
cannot be despised, serves instead of *really*
contemning such Dangers, as ought to be
contemned. Now the way to *distinguish*
rightly, *when* Courage is really That Vir-
tue which the Name denotes, is to con-
sider carefully its true Definition: Which,
(as I before observed,) is This; 'Tis a
Greatness or Braveness of Mind, consisting
and showing forth itself in a just *Contempt*
of Danger. Where therefore the Con-
tempt of Danger is *just* and *well-grounded*,
there such Contempt is the True Virtue
of Courage, a True Greatness and Bravery
of Mind: But where the Contempt of
Danger is *neither reasonable nor just*, there
it is *not* Courage, but *Fool-hardiness* and
Madness. For want of observing this
plain distinction it comes to pass, that
whereas it is True Greatness and Bravery
of Mind, for a Man to hazard his Life in
the Defence of his Country, in Defence of
the *common Rights and Liberties* of Man-
kind,

S E R M. kind, in opposition to the unjust Invasions
 XVII. of ambitious *Tyrants*, and the Great Op-
 pressors of the World; *contempt of Dan-*
 ger, in This case, being *just and well-*
grounded, because a Man hazards Himself
 for the *Publick Benefit*, and for the *pre-*
venting a much *greater and more extensive*
Evil than the Loss of his own single Life:
 From hence passionate and unreasonable
 Men ignorantly call it *Courage*, to ha-
 zard their Lives is their *own* private
Quarrels; where *Contempt of Danger* is,
 on the contrary, neither *reasonable nor*
just; because, neither is the Danger at all
 needful to be run into, nor is the Benefit
 proposed to be obtained by it, in any man-
 ner equal to the Evil hazarded. Again:
 Whereas it is True Greatness of Mind, to
 be *above* all vain *Superstitions*, to *despise*
 all false and groundless *Imaginations*, not
 to be terrified with *empty Phantoms*, nor
 fear *where no Fear is*; hence weak and
 profane Men have ridiculously attempted,
 to cause it to be looked upon as a piece
 of *Courage and Gallantry*, to *despise* the
real Differences of Good and Evil; to
mock at Truth in common with *Error*, and

The Folly of mocking at Sin.

375

at Religion and Virtue equally with Super-
stition; to affect to be above the Obliga-
tions even of the most reasonable and ne-
cessary Laws, without which no Order,
no Government, no Peace could possibly
subsist in the World; lastly, to dare un-
dauntedly to revile the Maker of all things,
and show their Fearlessness even of God
himself, by openly trampling upon his
Commandments in their Lives, and re-
proaching his Name by vain Oaths and
profane Speeches. The Fortitude of these
Men, is like that Courage of a Soldier,
who not daring to do his common Duty
against the publick Enemy, should be
perpetually showing his Prowess in brave-
ly refusing to obey the Orders of his pro-
per Commander. And the Liberty These
Heroes in Vice promise to their Followers,
in discharging them from all Obligations
of Virtue, and from all Fear of God, is
excellently described by St Peter, in his
2d epistle, ch. ii. 18. *When they speak
great swelling words of Vanity, they allure
thro' the Lusts of the Flesh, those that were
clean escaped from Them who live in Er-
rour; While they promise them Liberty,*
Bb 4 they

S E R M.
XVII.

S E R M. *they themselves are the Servants of Corrup-*
 XVII. *tion; For of whom a man is overcome, of*
 ~~~~~ *the same is he brought in bondage. These*  
*are the persons, who, in the worst and*  
*highest Sense of the phrase, make a Mock*  
*at Sin; and who are accordingly in Scrip-*  
*ture represented as being guilty of the*  
*worst and highest degree of Folly. Fools,*  
*that is, those who in a singular manner,*  
*and by way of emphasis or distinction a-*  
*bove all Others, deserve the Name of*  
*Fools, are They which make a Mock at*  
*Sin. Weaknesses there are in all Men;*  
*and the Most are too often guilty of such*  
*Actions, as would in strictness rank them,*  
*in those particulars at least, among the*  
*Unwise. But the compleat character of*  
*Folly, or that which renders a Man in his*  
*whole denomination, according to the*  
*Scripture-sense, a Fool; is the making a*  
*mock at Sin. Not, being deluded into it*  
*by Ignorance or Mistake; Not, being se-*  
*duced into it by Inadvertency or Surprise;*  
*But, knowingly and deliberately looking*  
*upon it as a trivial matter; mocking at*  
*it as a thing harmless, and of no great*  
*Danger; This is the proper Essence, This*  
 2 (if



(if I may so speak) is the *Perfection* of SERM.  
*Folly*. Nevertheless, because even of *This*, XVII.  
there are *Differences and Degrees*; and of  
the *Mockers* here spoken of by the Wise  
Man, there are *Diverse kinds*; I shall  
therefore in the following Discourse in-  
deavour briefly, but distinctly, to show, 1<sup>st</sup>,  
What is meant more particularly, by *ma-*  
*king a Mock at Sin*; 2<sup>dly</sup>, Upon *what*  
*grounds or reasons*, Men are tempted to  
be guilty of the several degrees of *This*  
*Vice*; and 3<sup>dly</sup>, How *weak* all those  
*Grounds* really are, and how *great* the  
*Folly* of Acting upon them.

I. IN the *First* place, as to the explica-  
tion of the Phrase, *making a Mock at*  
*Sin*; there are three sorts of Sinners, who,  
in their several Degrees, may justly be  
charged with *This* Guilt. Of the

1<sup>st</sup> and *highest* Degree, are those whom  
I have partly already described, who  
esteem it a piece of *Courage* to despise all  
Religion, and a *Greatness of Mind* to de-  
ride all the Obligations of *Virtue*. These  
are the Persons the Psalmist means, when  
he elegantly rises by *Steps* in his descrip-  
tion of Sinners, from the lowest degree  
of

S E R M. of Wickedness to the highest; *Pf. i. 1.*

XVII. *Blessed is the man, that hath not walked in the Counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of Sinners, and hath not sat in the Seat of the Scornful.* The Scornful, are those whom the Prophet *Jeremy* represents under the same Character, and in the Use of the same word, as the Wise Man in the Text, *Jer. xv. 17. I sat not in the Assembly of the Mockers.* To sit, (the word used both by *Jeremiah* and by the *Psalmist*,) signifies a fixt, determinate, secure, resolute establishment in a Habit of Wickedness; whereas walking, or standing, in the way of Sinners, represents only particular wicked Actions. And the Seat of the Scornful, (which is the *Psalmist's* phrase,) signifies the Highest Power and Dominion of Impiety. Just as our Saviour in the Revelations, elegantly describes the Tyranny of the Antichristian Church, by calling it *The Throne of Satan*; *Rev. ii. 13. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's Seat, (in the Original it is, where Satan's Throne) is.* The Persons who, in This sense, make a mock at Sin, are the Atheists,

*theists, and the openly Profane; Those* SERM. XVII.  
who think it *Wit*, to turn the most seri-  
*ous matters into Ridicule; and commit*  
the most *unjust and unrighteous Actions,*  
without Any reluctance or *Abhorrence.*  
These are the Persons whom *Salomon* de-  
scribes, *Prov. x. 23. It is as Sport to a*  
*Fool, to do mischief; and ch. xxvi. 18.*  
*As a Mad-man who casteth Firebrands,*  
*Arrows and Death; so is the man that de-*  
*ceiveth his Neighbour, and saith, Am not*  
*I in sport?* The same sort of Persons, are  
in the *New Testament* mentioned by *St*  
*Jude*, ver. 17. of his *Epistle; Remember,*  
saith he, *the words which were spoken be-*  
*fore of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus*  
*Christ, how they told you there should be*  
*Mockers in the last time, who should walk*  
*after their own ungodly Lusts.*

THEY who think it an *Objection* a-  
gainst the *Truth of Christianity*, that  
there should be found, even in the *World*  
that calls itself *Christian*, so much *Open*  
*Profaneness and Impiety* as there is; may  
do well to observe, how *distinctly* these  
things are *foretold* in the *New Testament*;  
and consequently that the *Fulfilling of*  
*them*

SERM. *them* is not an Argument *against*, but a  
 XVII. strong Evidence *for*, the truth of revealed  
 Religion.

2dly, THE next sort of Sinners, who may justly be charged with *making a Mock at Sin*, are those, who do not indeed in *Words*; like Those before-mentioned; but yet, in their *Actions*, do equally bring Contempt upon Religion. In their *Profession* they pretend to *believe in God*, but their *Practice* is the same with that of *Atheists and Infidels*. These are elegantly described by St Paul, Tit. i. 16, *They profess, that they know God; but in Works they deny him; being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.* This *practical Insult* upon religion, This *Contempt of Virtue and Goodness* in mens *Lives and Actions*, is as *really* in the Sight of God, though not so *offensively* in the Eye of the World, a *making a Mock at Sin*, in the Sense of the Text; as the most *profane Speeches* even of *professed Atheists*.

3dly, To *make a Mock at Sin*, may, in the last place, signify, entertaining so *slight* an Opinion of the *Evil and Danger*



*The Folly of mocking at Sin.*

381

ger of Sin, as makes men who are *not* SERM.  
entirely profligate, yet content themselves XVII.  
with *distant* resolutions of future Re-  
pentance, and in the mean time speak  
Peace to themselves in the Practice of  
Unrighteousness, or in the Injoyment of  
unlawful Pleasures. This may properly  
enough be called, though not in so *high*  
a sense as the forementioned Instances, a  
*making a Mock at Sin*. 'Tis a *seeming* to  
be *afraid* of it, and yet *not really* abhor-  
ring it. 'Tis entering voluntarily into the  
Snare of the Devil, and yet not daring  
to resolve to continue in it. 'Tis running  
into a Danger, with a Design to come  
out of it again; *as a Bird hasteth to the*  
*Snare, and knoweth not that it is for his*  
*Life*. In a word; 'tis *playing* with the  
Instruments of *Death*, and *sporting* with  
*Destruction*; for want of *seriously* and *in*  
*earnest* considering, what a dreadful thing  
it is to fall into the hands of the Living  
God, whose Wrath is a consuming Fire.  
The Description of *Leviathan* in the Book  
of *Job*, ch. xli. 5, may very naturally be  
applied to This Purpose; *Wilt thou play*  
*with him as with a Bird? or wilt thou*  
*bind*

SERM. *bind him for thy maidens? Shall the Com-*  
 XVII. *panions make a Banquet of him? Shall they*  
 ~~~~~ *part him among the Merchants? Canst thou*  
fill his skin with barbed irons, or his Head
with Fish-spears? Lay thine hand upon
him, remember the Battle, do no more.

II. AND now, having shown particularly, *what* is meant by this phrase of *making a mock at Sin*; I proceed, in the 2^d place, to consider *upon what Grounds or Reasons* men are tempted to be guilty of the several degrees of this Vice. And

1st, As to those *Sitters in the Seat of the Scornful*; those *profane* Spirits, who esteem it a mark of *Courage* to despise all Religion, and a *Greatness of Mind* to deride all the Obligations of Virtue: The *only Ground* These have to go upon, is *Atheism* and *Infidelity*. Either they must disbelieve the *Being of God*, and disclaim all difference of good and evil, and renounce in general all expectation of a future State; or at least they must reject all *divine Revelation*, casting behind them all the Promises and Threatnings of God, and denying that he will ever judge men according to their Works. This is excellently

The Folly of mocking at Sin.

383

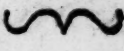
lently represented to us by St Peter, in SERM. XVII. his Second Epistle, ch. iii. 3, *There shall come, saith he, in the last days Scoffers, walking after their own Lusts, and saying, Where is the Promise of his coming? For since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were, from the Beginning of the Creation.* The Persons the Apostle here describes, looked upon all things as going on, it seems, in a constant and necessary Course of Nature: One generation of men passed away, and another came in the room of it; but the World remained still as it was; And thus, for ought They knew, things might hold on for ever. *The thing which Hath been, they thought, is That which Shall be; and* Eccl. i. 9. *that which Is done, is That which shall be done; and there is no New thing under the Sun.* Upon This foundation, the same kind of Debauchees argue with themselves in *All Ages; Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, Is. lvi. 12, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to morrow shall be as This day, and much more abundant.* There is a most elegant descri-

SERMON. description of This sort of Sinners, in
 XVII. the 2d chapter of the Book of *Wisdom*,
 ver. 1, *The Ungodly said, reasoning with themselves but not aright;-----We are born at all adventures, and we shall be hereafter as though we had never been; for the Breath in our Nostrils is as smoak, and a little spark in the moving of our Heart:-----Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth:-----Let us oppress the poor righteous man, let us not spare the widow, nor reverence the gray hairs of the aged; Let our Strength be the Law of Justice, for that which is Feeble is found to be nothing worth. Thus the only foundation This kind of Mockers build upon, is the Hope that there will be no future state, no judgment to come.*

2dly, THE second sort; those who pretend to believe a God, and another life after this, and yet live as vitiously as if they believed it not. The manner of These, is to flatter themselves with a Notion, that Sin is not of so dangerous a nature, as the Preachers of the Gospel represent it;

The Folly of mocking at Sin.

385

it; that *Morality*, or Righteousness of S E R M.
Life, is not absolutely of indispensable XVII.
importance; and that God will be very 
well satisfied with a *Form* of Godliness,
with a *Zeal* for *Names and Distinctions*
of Religion, though not accompanied with
Moral Virtue. And then

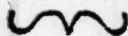
3dly, As to the *last* sort of Men, who
(I said) might also justly be charged with
being in some degree guilty of the same
Vice of *making a Mock at Sin*; namely,
those who are really sensible of the Neces-
sity of true Repentance and Amendment,
and yet at the present speak Peace to them-
selves in the Practice of Unrighteousness,
or in the Injoyment of unlawful Pleasures:
The *only* Foundation *These* can possibly
go upon, is an artificial Design of secu-
ring to themselves Both *Worlds*, and of
ingrossing *More* Happiness than either
God or Nature designed them; by injoy-
ing securely the Pleasures of *Sin* for a
Season, and at the End by Repentance
obtaining the Reward of *Virtue* likewise.
This is what the Apostle calls, *mocking of*
God, *Gal. vi. 7*; and is indeed more tru-
ly a *mocking* or *deceiving* of Themselves.

VOL. III.

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As

S E R M. As will appear, if we proceed now, in
XVII. the *Third* place,



III. To consider, how *Weak* all the forementioned *Grounds or Reasons* are, upon which men are tempted to be guilty of the several Degrees of this Vice; and consequently how *Great* the *Folly* is of Acting upon those Grounds: *Fools make a Mock at Sin.* And

1st, As to that *highest* degree of *Profane Mockers*, who have *no other* Hope to rest upon but that of *Atheism and Infidelity*; *Their Folly* is *greater* than can be expressed in words, or than can rightly be conceived by any Imagination. For, *What* is the State of such a person, when God taketh away his Soul? Can he be *sure* that there is *no God*? or can he *demonstrate* to himself, that there will be no future state? The *Hardiest Unbeliever* never yet pretended to have *demonstration* in this case. And if he had, yet all the Comfort, all the Hopes, that could be built even upon *That*, would be but the Hope of a Beast, the Expectation of perishing as if he had never been. But since there *can* be *no* such demonstration, on the

The Folly of mocking at Sin.

387

the side of Atheism; the consequent Possibility on the *other* side, that there may *be a God*, proves the Folly of the profane Mocker to be *intolerable*; the *Probability* that there *is* a God, still *increases* That Folly; the *Certainty*, the *Demonstration*, that there *cannot but be* a God, shows it to be what *Solomon* elegantly sets forth in that accumulative expression, *Eccles. vii. 25, the Wickedness of Folly, even of Foolishness and Madness.* For if there *is* a God, as the Works of Nature demonstrate that there is; both *Reason itself* declares, and *Revelation* fully confirms, that he *will* govern the World in Righteousness, and in the End judge every man according to his Works. That *poor* Objection of the Scoffers mentioned by *St Peter*, that all things *hitherto* continue as they were from the Beginning of the Creation, and that therefore they *never* will be otherwise; discovers the extreme Shortness of Those mens Understandings, who consider not that God with much long-suffering gives men Space of Repentance, and can as easily judge the World after a Thousand years as after

SERM. One days space. Upon which delay of
XVII. his Lord's Coming, if any wicked Ser-
vant flatters himself that he will not come
at all, and upon That Assurance of Im-
punity hardens himself in his Impiety;
*the Lord of That Servant will come in a
day when he looketh not for him, and in
an hour that he is not aware of, and will
cut him asunder, and appoint him his por-
tion with the Hypocrites; there shall be
weeping and gnashing of Teeth. For, as
in the days that were before the Flood, men
were eating and drinking, marrying and
giving in marriage, until the day that
Noah entred into the Ark; And knew not
until the Flood came, and took them all
away: And, as it was in the days of Lot,
they did eat, they drank, they bought, they
sold, they planted, they builded; But the
same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it
rained fire and brimstone from Heaven,
and destroyed them all: Even thus (says
our Lord) shall it be, in the day when the
Son of Man is revealed, St Luke xvii. 30.*
Then shall the Lord convince ungodly men
of all *their hard and profane Speeches
which they have spoken against him: And*
the

The Folly of mocking at Sin.

389

the wicked, seeing the Salvation of the S E R M.
righteous, *shall with anguish of Spirit say* XVII.
within themselves, (as 'tis elegantly expres-
sed in the Book of Wisdom, ch. v. 4.) We
Fools accounted his Life Madness, and his
End to be without Honour; How is he
numbred among the children of God, and
his Lot is among the Saints!

2dly, As to those who cannot argue
themselves into Infidelity, but *believe* the
Certainty of a Future State and of a Judg-
ment to come; and yet live vitiously, and
continue Impenitent, upon a *general, loose,*
and *inconsiderate* expectation, that Sin is
less *dangerous*, and God more *merciful*,
than the Preachers of the Gospel repre-
sent him: The Folly of making a Mock
at Sin in *This* Sense, and upon *This*
Ground; (which is indeed nothing else,
but resolving to *neglect* a mortal Disease
as of *no Danger*, and to shut ones Eyes
upon the Mouth of *Destruction*;) The
Folly of *This*, I say, is well reprov'd by
the Author of the Book of *Ecclus*, ch. xxi.
2, *My Son,-----flee from Sin as from the*
Face of a Serpent; for-----the Teeth there-
of are as the Teeth of a Lion, slaying the
Souls

S E R M. *Souls of Men; and, All iniquity is as a*
 XVII. *two-edged sword, the wounds whereof cannot be healed.* To imagine that God will be pleased with an empty Form of Godliness, and accept a Zeal for mere Names and Distinctions of Religion, without true Virtue and Holiness of Life, is, to be so foolish as to think God more easily deceived, even than mortal Men; and that the Searcher of Hearts will be imposed upon with an outward Profession of Service, which even an Earthly Superiour would with indignation reject. Little children, saith St John, let no man deceive you: He that Doth righteousness, is righteous. The Vain Hope of those who rely on any Other Foundation, is affectionately described in the 5th chapter of the Book of Wisdom, ver. 14, *The Hope of the Ungodly, is like Dust that is blown away with the Wind; like a thin Froth, that is driven away with the Storm; like as the Smoke which is dispersed here and there with a Tempest; and passeth away as the Remembrance of a Guest, that tarrieth but a day: But the Righteous live for evermore; their Reward also is with the Lord, and the Care of them is with the most High.*

The Folly of mocking at Sin.

391

3dly and lastly; As to those who are SERM.
truly sensible of the indispensable Neces- XVII.
sity of a Virtuous life, and yet *at the pre-*
sent speak Peace to themselves in the
Practice of Unrighteousness and in the
injoyment of Unlawful Pleasures, upon
an Intention of Repenting and Amending
hereafter: The *Folly* of making a mock
at Sin in *This* sense, is the *Folly* of Play-
ing *with Death*, and Sporting *with De-*
struction: 'Tis the *Folly* of letting slip
opportunities, which possibly, nay, very
probably, may never be retrieved: 'Tis
the *Folly* of provoking God to cut us off
in his Wrath, and to assign us our Portion
among Hypocrites and Unbelievers. To
conclude, 'Tis the *Folly* of *incapacitating*
a man's self *more and more* for the doing
of That, which yet is of absolute Neces-
sity not to be left undone. For except
we do effectually repent and amend, and
That speedily too, so as to bring forth
the Fruits of Virtue and Righteousness,
we must inevitably perish: And yet the
longer any man continues in Sin, the
more difficult it becomes for him to leave
it off. For he grows *hardned* at length
through the Deceitfulness of Sin; and by
being

S E R M. being long *accustomed to do Evil*, it be-
 XVII. comes in a manner (figuratively and com-
 paratively speaking,) as difficult for him
 to *learn to do well*, as for the *Ethiopian*
 to *change his Skin*, or the *Leopard his*
Spots. The Prophet *Jeremy* most ele-
 gantly sets forth the *same Difficulty* in
 another Comparison, wherewith I shall
 conclude; ch. xii. 5, *If thou hast run with*
Footmen, and They have wearied thee, then
How canst thou contend with Horses? And
if in the Land of Peace, wherein thou
trustedst, they wearied thee, then How wilt
thou do in the Swelling of Jordan?

T H A T every One of Us, may in Time
 set about the Practice of our Duty, be-
 fore our Feet stumble upon the dark
 Mountains, and the things that belong to
 our Peace be hid from our Eyes; God,
 of his infinite mercy, grant, &c.



The End of VOL. III.